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BEN BRACE.



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F. WARNE AND CO.





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BEN BRACE,

THE LAST OF NELSON'S AGAMEMMONS.

CAPTAIN CHAMIER, R.N.,

COMMANDER
OF THE "AGAMEMMON."



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BEN BRACE,

THE LAST OF THE AGAMEMMONS.

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CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST ALLIANCE WITH YOUNG AGAMEMNON.

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he and all the rest of them look like ham-mocks in a netting. Tom Toprail and I have seen many a strange sight. He had been burnt out of one ship, and blown out of another. One night, when we were sitting under the lee of the weather bulwark on the fore-castle, I said to him :

'Tom, let the old *Agamemnon* roll about in this Gulf of Lions, as they call it, until she rolls the sea smooth ; here we are, safe and snug ; and now tell me about that fire and your brother, which some one said was the reason you never lit a pipe if a rope-yarn was near. Come, share this glass with me, and begin.'

'This is all about it,' he replied, 'and no man knows it better ; it is not half a century that can dance out the lines of my memory, and I remember it just as well as if it happened yesterday.'

'No doubt you do, Tom,' said I ; 'I remember longer ago than that. But blaze away, my boy.'

'Well, then,' continued Tom, 'since you can't stopper your impatience, I suppose I must go smack at it. It was in the year 1779 that I belonged to the *Glasgow*, of twenty guns, when she was stationed in the West Indies. I was then seventeen years old ; and though I say it myself, who perhaps ought not to say it, yet I was as good a looking fellow as ever weathered the Palisades* at Jamaica, or sucked a monkey† at Barbadoes. My brother Bill was on board with me ; he was a year younger than myself—but he was such a fellow ! Lord love you, his heart was all for me ; he was a brother and a friend : I could spin you such a yarn about him ! Well, my brother Bill was stationed in the fore-top, and so was I ; he was in the starboard-watch, and I in the larboard ; we were both light hands, and therefore regular cloud-crushers, always the lightest up, always at the lightest aloft. We had been cruising off St. Domingo, when, finding that we had no luck there, we steered away for Jamaica, and came to an anchor in Montego Bay.

'Squelched over all for a moment,' said I ; 'didn't you catch the *Badger* there ?'

'Ay, sir, ay.'

'I know all about it,' I said, as I twined the cord of the main-top-gallant line round my wrist to save me from a fall back. 'Why, Nelson commanded the *Zealous*, and I was in the jolly-boat when—'

'Avast there, Ben !' said Tom ; 'it will all come out now. Well, we came into Montego Bay, as I said before ; and there we found the *Badger* at anchor. We

shortened sail, man-of-war fashion, altogether, for the cat had taught some of us to skip. Bill and I were on the fore-top-gallant yard furling the sail, when the first lieutenant called out to one of the midshipmen to run below and see what smoke that was coming up the after-hatchway. Well, I had done my duty aloft, and had come down on the fore-castle, when there was the devil's own rumpus about beating to quarters, calling the firemen with their buckets ; and before we had time to say Jack Robinson, the flames followed the smoke and the ship was on fire. The purser's steward had done the thing. It came up the main hatchway in one line of light, flying up aloft, catching every rope, and in a moment the whole ship from hull to trucks was in a blaze. There was considerable confusion, as you may suppose, and the men aloft, frightened by the sudden blaze, endeavoured to lower the quarter-boats ; but, before they could do this, the deck became so hot that they took the shortest way of leaving the ship, by jumping overboard. I was all "no how" ; I did not know what to do. The panic had spread forward, and those who preferred a dry berth to a swim crowded on the fore-castle, and got ready to lower themselves into the boats of the *Badger*, which put off immediately the accident was perceived. Nelson himself was in one, as cool as if we had no sun or fire to warm him ; he picked up those who had thrown themselves overboard.'

'I see it all now !' said I ; 'I remember it as well as yesterday's grub ; bear a hand and come to the clinch, Tom. We picked up the floaters, and the sharks got no dinner. Go on, Tom ; why, you're as long as a seventy-four in stays.'

'Well,' continued Tom, 'it was *see ki fo*, as the Crapauds say, and each man endeavoured to save some of his traps as well as himself. I made a dive below in hopes of getting near the mess-chest ; but the smoke was so thick, that I came up crying as if the cooper had knocked off my eyelids. I was just in time to avoid being roasted ; for now the fire had extended forward, and the flames ran up both sides of the fore-masting, and there was a general jump overboard ; it was like so in my rockets going up together, and the whole to and fro in a blaze, whilst the melted pitch came dropping down like a shower of boiling rain. I had got upon the starboard cat-head, making ready to part company with the ship, when I heard a scream aloft, and I saw my brother on the topmast cross-trees, standing against the mast, and clinging close to it to avoid the fire ; he had lost his mind, and I so alarmed I could not assist him. Several in the boats—'

* The Palisades is the hanging ground of Port Royal.

† Drinking and out of one's wits, the old Jamaican name for the spiritless crew.

sailors never go straight an end with our histories.

I got into the *Worcester*, for Nelson gave me a character as an active seaman, and one who did not care any more for heat and cold than a toad. We did not do much in that ship, because no opportunity offered; but when we came back, Nelson passed his examination, and the next day they made him second lieutenant of the *Lovesteffe* frigate, commanded by Captain William Locker; and away he went, and I on board, and always a foretopman, to the West Indies again.—I'll just tell you a short yarn about Nelson, to show you what a spirited fellow he was when he was a young man. We had a nice chase after an American letter of marque; it was blowing so hard that one of the maintopmen, who was going up the lee rigging, was blown straight out like a pennant, and, if he had not held on with his eyelids, he would have been carried away like a feather. The sea was rolling mountains high, and we never met one lower than Greenwich Hill.

'Take the cutter,' says the captain to the first lieutenant, 'and board that vessel.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' he answered, and dived below like a widgeon to fish up his dirk; he was a long time finding it, however; when who should come on deck but the captain, who had been below with the master with the charts; he saw the boat along-side, very likely to be staved to atoms. 'Hulloa!' said he. I was in the boat keeping her off with the stretchers, and shoving her clear off the lee main-yardarm, which was rolling in the water.

The captain looks squally-like, as he says, 'Have I got no officer on board my ship who can take possession of the prize?'

'Yes, sir,' says the master, 'I'm the man who will do it.'

'I beg your pardon,' says *Lieutenant* Nelson, 'it's my turn first; and if I come back without securing her, why then it's your turn.'

We had a tough job of it; and one sea, for the vessel was water-logged, nearly washed us right over as high as the maintop.

When I told this yarn to Tom—for we were always a spinning them one to the other—says Tom,

'What year was that in?'

'Why, in 1779,' said I.

'Ah!' said he, 'I went higher in the air than you that year, and lower in the water.' And this is the way he told his story.

'I'll just take the liberty,' he began, 'of telling you about one Captain Farmer. I'm not the man to let such a gallant fellow as that be neglected; for although we may now have more finished officers on board our ships, yet we can't have braver, more loyal, or more excellent seamen than we had fifty

years back. You may make the uniform more tidy, and you may make them know more about stars, and the sun and the moon; but you cannot place better hearts in their bodies than our old ones had, dress them how you will: this I'm quite certain of, that ever since the seamen docked their tails, and invited one mess to drink tea with the other, your old Jack is gone to the devil; and all I hope is, that the hyson mundungo ships' companies will do as well as we did.

'It was on the 6th of October, 1779, when Captain Farmer commanded the *Quebec*, of thirty-two guns, that we saw a large ship to leeward, we being off Ushant: we bore up, and as she was within two gun-shots when we first observed her at daylight, we were soon, in spite of her endeavour to escape, along-side of her, and commenced action with the *Surveillante*, of forty guns. At ten o'clock, A.M., we poured in our first broadside; it went rattling into her in great style, and we made sure of our prize; but she gave us a smart return, and there were plenty of petitioners for Greenwich. Well, it was give and take, like two good ones, for three hours and a half, during which time our brave captain was severely wounded. Away went the Frenchman's foremast, and we gave three good cheers; but before we could finish the huzzas, our mizen-mast had fallen, and the main-mast was badly wounded.

"Don't make game of the foolish," said Bill Jones, "you might be struck comical yourself;" and sure enough away went the mainmast over the side, and the topsail and course was right in the way of our firing. Before one o'clock the Frenchman had not a stick standing, and we were just in the same state. Our enemy's guns were heavier than ours, and he had more of them, and more men to work them.

'We did not have all this fun to ourselves; for the *Rambler*, a little cutter, commanded by one Lieutenant George, was touching up a French cutter to leeward of us, and their little popguns came in between our great guns and musketry.

"Huzza, my boys!" said Captain Farmer, "now at it again; never say *die* whilst there's a shot in the locker."

'Well, we were doing it properly, when all of a sudden the sails caught fire from our firing through them, and we were soon in a blaze. I thought I was born to be burnt alive, for I never could steer clear of a fire: other ships have sailed round the world and not been burnt, or fought all through the Nile without catching fire; but every blessed ship I got into, somehow or other, plays a compliment to old Nick and lights up a blaze.—The firemen were all alive with their buckets; and I, who had seen quite enough of ship-burning in Montego Bay, in the

from Lake Nicaragua into the Atlantic ; make himself master of the lake itself, and of the cities of Grenada and Leon ; and thus cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and southern possessions in America. This was all very fine to talk about, but we knew very little about the climate ; and the difficulties which occurred in fitting us out for the breeze delayed the expedition until we got into the sickly season, and we had to fight against that more than against the enemy.

In January, 1780, we embarked on board of the *Hinchinbrook* and some transports five hundred men, which we conveyed to Cape Gracias à Dios, in Honduras. When we got there we might have believed that a general desertion had taken place amongst the inhabitants, for we could not find a native to sell us a cocoa-nut ; these fellows having been told that we came to make slaves of them and sell them at Jamaica. But we soon got over this difficulty, for one of the natives having come down upon us, we gave him such fine presents, that he shortly brought others, and those who had been our greatest enemies soon became our best friends. The naval department was under the command of my captain ; and the soldiers had for a leader as brave a man as ever walked on land, one Major Polson. They had a very uncomfortable berth of it in their tents, which they fixed in a swampy and unwholesome plain : in the day they were grilled, and in the evening they were eaten ; for the mosquitoes—you know Honduras is on the Mosquito shore—came buzzing and biting by millions at a time ; and the sand-flies took their share of the good things thus providentially provided for them by General Dalling. These voracious devils had one month's good food ; after which, we proceeded along the shore to collect our friends amongst the natives ; they were to find us boats, and to lend us a hand in the attack.

We reached the river San Juan on the 24th of March, perfectly under the guidance of the Indians, for not a team of our party had ever been up the river. And here Nelson was to have taken up the command ; but he was not the man to do that, for he knew that the service was a hazardous one, and that something desperate would be attempted ; so he for, of his orders, and gave others for the embarking of the troops, two hundred of which he placed on board the *Mosquito* craft and in two of our boats, and away we started. But, as I said before, the great people at Jamaica feared that we should arrive at the dry season ; and we had hard work to force the boats over the shallows, and thus proceed up this narrow and now low river. At last, after several days' work, the hardest and the hottest I remember, we got into deep water, and then had to con-

tend against rapids and currents. If it had not been for the Indians, we might have turned back without doing anything, for we never should have found our way ; as it was, those curious chaps and ourselves did all the work, and the soldiers had enough to do to keep quiet and cool. It was the most infernal hot expedition I ever was engaged in.

On the 9th of April we reached San Bartolomeo, an island which the Spaniards had fortified ; and although the battery itself was a little semicircular affair, mounting only nine or twelve swivels, and manned with only eighteen men, yet it was placed to command the most rapid and difficult part of the river. It gave us a warm reception ; when Nelson jumped out of the boat into the mud, and was nearly sticking there altogether, but he extricated himself with only the loss of his shoes ; he was followed by that unfortunate man Despard, who was a captain in the army ; and his coxswain, I hope, was not much behind-hand ; we made a dash at the battery and boarded it ; away jumped the Spaniards, and we gave them a parting salute with their own guns. This was child's play ; for when a man gets a crack from a shot, why it's what he expects, and that's all in the regular service line : but, Lord bless you ! what's a grape-shot to the yellow-fever ? it's like the small fish which nibbled off Tom's toes, when a shark might have swallowed him up.

The Castle of San Juan was only sixteen miles above this battery on the island ; and when we got within a few miles of it, we landed the soldiers and the stores, and marched on through a forest of trees so thick that I got an inch thinner by jamming myself between them, and we could not open our eyes for snakes jumping into them from the boughs of the trees. I dare say there's many a man who does not believe this ; but I tell you the truth, that one of the men was bitten just under the eye by one of those little devils, and could not proceed for the pain ; and that when some of us who were with him not five minutes afterwards, went back to assist him, we found him not only dead, but putrid. Ay ! passed in five minutes, and I saw him lying dead ; and now that I'm writing my life, it is not worth my while at my age to be telling lies to a play actor, who calls himself a king by candlelight. I remember that one day Nelson was very much fatigued, and ordered his hammock, which was lit only led, to be hung up between two trees, and as he turned and was soon asleep—for I often wondered how he kept awake. The Indians were about the hammock, when one saw a particular kind of lizard pass over his face. The Indian waved him directly, and told him to get

CHAPTER III.

THE VALUE OF GOOD SEAMANSHIP.

'Four French sail, in show so stout,
Bore down on the *Arethusa*.
The fam'd *Belle Poule* straight a-head did lie;
The *Arethusa* scorn'd to fly—
Not a sheet, nor a tack,
Nor a brace, did she slack;
Tho' the Frenchmen laugh'd, and thought it stuff,
They knew not the handiul of men how tough
On board of the *Arethusa*.'

Sea Song.

I HAVE heard our doctor say, who was a clever man from the north of the Tweed, that the human body is nearly at the same heat either amongst the ice at the North Pole, or under the Equator near the coast of Africa; and he remarked—for I have a good memory, as you'll find out as we get along—that if a thermometer was placed in a man's mouth at the North Pole, and another in a man's mouth at the Equator, the heat would be the same. I dare say this is all true enough with philosophers, as these learned men call themselves, but I don't think it is quite gospel in regard to seamen. But the Admiralty are of the philosopher's opinion; for when Nelson was appointed to the *Albemarle* in 1782, and I went on board as coxswain, although I was only twenty-two years of age, we found that great lords in London believed in this equal heat, and concluded, that as we had been baked in Honduras, we might as well cool the loaf in the Baltic; and therefore, before we were what you might call men again, we were ordered to the North Sea, and kept there the whole winter. If a stranger had seen Nelson when the order arrived for our sailing, he would not have believed him the same quiet man he mostly was. But he could not stand this cruel order without a murmur; and it stuck by him all his life. Now it's very seldom that ever I dared in my dreams to differ with Nelson in opinion, but I think it was foolish of him to complain of that which he could not remedy; and I say, that if a man's health is not good enough for him to go anywhere that he is ordered, why, he had better hang up his fiddle and be off on shore.

Some good is always to be got by sickness; either a man becomes a better man, or he teaches him self the employment of time, and soon gets tired of looking out of a window wondering what the rest of the world could be at. When I got a little about, I fell a little in love; and I soon found out that a man who could neither write nor read would make a very bad correspondent. I set to work with a good will, and, before a year had passed, I wrote as nice and as clear a hand as the ship's clerk; so that I was soon found more useful, and afterwards became the coping-

clerk of the great captain. We were in the North Sea during the time of the armed neutrality, and therefore we could do nothing in the way of service. She was an overmasted ship, that *Albemarle*, and we were every now and then in danger of turning the turtle.

At last we got safe enough back to the Downs, and there we anchored. I had taken the captain on shore in the barge, and he gave me leave to stay. The boat was sent off, and I began to cruise about that town of smugglers; when all of a sudden a squall of wind came on, and immediately afterwards a slight sprinkling of rain by way of feeding it. In two hours time it was blowing as hard as it blew the other day at Barbadoes, when it threw the church down. I found myself standing on the beach, looking at the poek-marked boatmen, who all get those holes in their faces by their mothers amusing themselves in rolling their children over the shingle. There I found my captain holding both his hands to shelter his eyes as he kept them steadily fixed upon the ship. A store-ship was anchored just a-head of us, and the captain saw that she was dragging her anchors, and that she would drift athwart hawse of the *Albemarle*. Nelson feared that both ships would drift on the Goodwin Sands; he roared out to the Deal men to launch a boat and take him on board; but they were mostly married men with large families, and by no means inclined to risk their own lives when they did not consider that anybody else's was in danger; but they are the men when real danger stares at them—they are the fellows who launch through a surf that would blind a man to look at.

On this occasion the Deal men thought it impossible to get on board, the gale was so uncommonly high. It was quite in vain Nelson pointed out his fears in regard to his ship; they would not budge an inch; until at last, after they had held a consultation, they agreed to try for fifteen guineas. We jumped into the boat; and, to the astonishment and fear of all present, we embarked during the height of the tempest. Bravely the men clung to their oars, and in spite of all the difficulties opposed to us, we reached the ship. The store-ship had drifted clear of the *Albemarle*, but had left her without either foremast or bowsprit. I never saw Nelson greater than he was at this moment, for, although suffering from sickness, he cheered on the boatmen to their greatest exertions, disregarding his personal safety, and only anxious to assist by his best endeavours to save the ship which had been committed to his charge.

Away we went to Canada after this, and there I saw a little piece of gratitude in an

was in for it : his heart had been moved by the soft warblings of a woman, and when he took leave of her, he became very queer, and when he came on board, he looked at the ship as if he did not like her. The next morning he went ashore again, and who should he meet on the beach but Mr. Davison. 'Hulloa, Nelson,' said he, 'what brings you ashore?'

'I can't leave Quebec,' said Nelson, 'without seeing the woman whose society has contributed so much to my happiness, and to whom I intend to offer my hand.'

'If you do,' said Mr. Davison, 'your ruin must inevitably follow.'

'Then let it follow,' said Nelson, 'for I am resolved to do it.'

'And I,' replied Davison, 'am resolved that you shall not.' And before my captain could recover his astonishment, for he was not a man to be contradicted, Mr. Davison handed him to his boat, wished him good-bye, and in a few days we were off Sandy Hook, where we found the commander-in-chief, Admiral Digby, and Lord Hood, with a detachment of Rodney's victorious fleet.

When Nelson returned on board from his official visit to the admiral, he rubbed his hands with delight, and told the first lieutenant that the *Albemarle* was to be attached to Lord Hood's squadron, and go to the West Indies. Well, there we were again; and who do you think we found there? why, his present Majesty the King, God bless him! He was Duke of Clarence then, and commanded a frigate. Lord Hood took Nelson to him, and said on the quarter-deck to the Prince, 'Sir, if your royal highness wishes to ask any questions respecting naval tactics, Captain Nelson can give you as much information as any officer in the fleet.'

Well, it was a proud thing to be under the orders of such a man. There was Nelson (as the King describes him) 'the merest boy of a captain he had ever seen, dressed in a full-faced uniform, and an old-fashioned waistcoat with long flaps, and his lank unpowdered hair tied in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length,' making altogether about as odd a looking hero as ever man put eyes upon. But when he began to speak, especially on nautical matters, he was as wide awake as any man I ever knew.

Idleness will make the devil himself fall in love; but the man that is always occupied seldom gets into that scrape. Did anybody ever hear of a sailor, who had a good sharp first lieutenant—one of those hundred-eyed chaps that never allow a man time to say his prayers—falling in love? A fellow, when he is perched up on the top-mast-head during a cruise, may rub up his affections, and sing to himself (for woe betide him if the first lieutenant hears him!) some old

gammon about eyes and sighs, and doves and loves; but if he happens to look back upon the past, and not look a-head or on both bows, and they see a sail from the deck before it's seen from the mast-head, why, instead of his heart being tickled by his love, his back will get scratched by the boatswain's mate. And it's just so when you have got into the scrape: only screw up your mind to activity, only get some occupation which must employ your time, and then, as the old song says,

'Love may go, with a sigh and a die,
To Jericho.'

So it was with Nelson: no sooner did he get to sea, than his ship became his wife: he was anxious that she should be smarter and prettier than the others; he watched the discipline, his mind recovered itself, and when he got on board of her, he quite forgot his love; although I dare say a man with heart like his never forgot the kindness he had received;—even the heat of the West Indies did not destroy it.

At this time it was believed that the French would attempt some of the passages between the Bahamas; but their fleet got into Puerto Cabello, that same harbour from which the gallant Hamilton cut out the Spanish frigate—a deed which the naval history of the world cannot surpass, and which has rarely, if ever, been rivalled; an affair so gallantly romantic, that few would credit the circumstance, if the frigate had not been our own before, and known as such after the capture—I mean the *Hermione*. To be sure, Lord Cochrane did something like it at Callao. But let me not be rubbing up all the great actions of our countrymen, or I shall never get on. In 1783, the peace was proclaimed; the *Albemarle* was ordered home and paid off, and I gave Yellow Jack the slip again, although it left my face rather of the mahogany-colour—something like a boiled ham, as the landlord says; and I don't think I ever quite recovered the mosquito bites and the figgers. I got a berth on shore as captain's steward, and it won my heart to see how Nelson bothered the Jacks-in-office to pay the wages of the Jacks discharged. He was at it every day but one, and that day he went to court. After much harassing, all his men were paid what was due to them from other ships. They all volunteered every man of them to follow him, should he obtain another command; and there was not a real good seaman in the ship who did not envy me my good fortune in being always near him.

We sometimes hear, that your great dukes have hundreds of thousands of pounds; and I never could understand where they keep it, and how it is that it never grows less. Well, I think a hundred and fifty pounds a great deal of money, but

It happened one day that he was rather feverish, having fallen sick after the burning and bathing, for he never leaped overboard until the flames were on board of him. I gave him an orange, for which he certainly appeared grateful, and says he—'I say, Brace, yours is a queer name, and in all my cruising I have met with only one family of that sort, and they lived in Cawsand Bay.' He got no farther than that, when I caught hold of his hand and said, 'It was my own dear father and mother;' and says I, 'Avast heaving, shipmate: when did you see them last, and how were they? Did you see my little sister Jane? come now, I'm all alive to run it off the reel, so tell us, Surly Billy, that's a good fellow.'

'My compliments,' said he, 'for your Surly Billy, and if I was not brought short by this Yellow Jack'—(you see he had a slight attack of the West India undertaker)—'I would take the liberty of Surly-Billying your lug, you precious spawn of a crooked-nosed fisher-woman, and brother to as cursed a——'

I shoved my fist right into his mouth; I never heard what he intended to say, for he was very weak, and the shake I gave him set him off into a faint. I thought he was dead, and bolted away for the lop-lolly-boy and the surgeon, and gave the sailmaker a hint that he might have a job to do before sunset. We got round to Port Royal before he recovered, and he was landed with the rest of the sick in order, as we all thought, to feed the land-crabs. I hated him so that I never went near him afterwards, and I soon quite forgot his phiz, which the West India doctor altered a little.

This piece of intelligence—for in my mind I had fancied the worst, although I made allowances for his anger at my calling him Surly Billy—always stuck by me; and many's the time when I laid myself down in my hammock after a hard day's work, I used to think what he could have meant by the abuse of my mother, and the bad language he was about to cast upon my sister; for she was about seventeen at that time, and, if she had grown up as she promised when I left her, she must have been a beauty; but she was so young when I took French leave, that I could not fancy her any other than a pretty child.

Well, time passed until the *ALL HAND* was paid off; and when Nelson went abroad, I got leave to go to Cawsand Bay until his return: he gave me money enough to pay my passage, and I started with a good store of pocket-living, intending to buy new nets, or lend a hand in purchasing a sail or repairing the boat. Away I went with a light heart and a fair wind, leaving in the fob of my pocket twenty-five pounds, and singing

'I that once was a ploughman, and I am now.'

I soon got on the right course for Plymouth, and I knew by the distances marked upon stones how many miles I had run. I went on, as all men do at first when they start on an expedition they fancy, head down and legs out. I took as long strides as a goose in dry weather, and walked as fast as an ostrich over the Pampas. I got to a place called Hounslow without feeling a bit fatigued; and seeing a decent kind of harbour, I came to anchor, and called for a pot of porter and a pipe. In the shaking of a handspike I was so comfortable, that I would not have called the King my grandfather. It was a pretty good kind of house, with a large daub called the King's-head outside, and there were several country-looking lubbers in smock-frocks who came in to take a drop; and, as at this time it began to rain, I thought I might as well anchor for the night. I began to look out for a berth.

'Hullo! shipmate,' said I, to a better kind of looking fellow, 'what kind of hammocks do they swing in this house?'

The fellow gave me a quick glance of the eye, and I thought I felt him reading my heart. He answered, 'Oh, very good, everything a man could want to make him comfortable and happy. But where are you bound to, for you don't belong to this place?'

'No, not I' (but I wondered how he guessed it); 'I am going to Plymouth.'

'To Plymouth?' says he.

'Yes,' said I, 'to Plymouth; the wars are over now, and I am off for home. I am not without a shot in the locker,' giving, my pocket a bit of a smack.

'I can assist you, my noble-hearted fellow,' says my friend; 'and give me your word; you sailors are the best men in the world.'

'Take a drop out of my jorum, sir,' said I. 'Here, landlord, freshen haws: here are the pot or porter.'

'No, sir,' said he, 'but who pays for it?'

'I do, you lubber,' says I. 'Do you think I'm a slack to come swallowing the bait and then shake myself off the hook? No, Ben Brace never did that; so, here's your pay, and I have enough left to buy a hog-head of porter, and a purser's bread-bag of tobacco; so, stir your stumps, old Blowhard.' He was as fat as a ground tier butt, and seemed as if all his crew inside of him was pumping up his breath; his face was as red as a boiled lobster, and he wore a great white apron which came down to his knees, and from those to his fore-foot he wore top-boots. He seemed to know my new companion, and he looked at him as much as to say, 'You're a pretty scoundrel, I'm bound in you ain't.'

I thought it was all jealousy, and paid no attention to the landlord, but asked my

looking behind me, and carrying a press of sail, until I came to the turn which overlooks the bay and commands a view of the village. Here I stopped. I remember at this moment the feeling which overcame me. I saw before me the scene of my childhood; I saw the cottage in which I was born and reared; and I could perceive the door from which I had escaped, and left my parents in all the agony of uncertainty if they were childless, or if I had been kidnapped or murdered; never from that moment had I sent any tidings; and afterwards, when I had learned to write, I had grown somehow dim in memory, and my mother's affection had been forgotten in the scenes I have already described.

I was now fearful to advance. I was grown to be a man; the sultry sun of the West Indies had scorched me, sickness had altered, manhood had changed me; I knew I could advance unknown, but I trembled lest I should hear some father's curse hurled upon the head of his ungrateful and disobedient child. I stood more than an hour undecided how to act. I watched each girl that I saw running to and fro, and thought of my own little sister Jane; and it was sunset before I wound up my resolution to face the old people.

'Cheer up, Ben!' said I to myself, 'there's many a lad does a worse act than you have done; and had not the land-sharks grabbed your hard-won money, even the most hard-hearted of parents might grant forgiveness when they saw that affection had not been destroyed by separation or by time. It is not every one who gives his prize-money to his mother, or who even shares his pay with his wife. Many's the time I have seen the half-starving creature, whom the law had made virtuous, turned away unacknowledged; whilst those who sold their charms, and were young and handsome, contributed the venom of their abuse against the lawful, the affectionate wife; ay, and we have seen the wife turned over the gangway, her very husband scandalously rebuking her.'

The sun was down by five o'clock, and the drizzling rain or lightly wind announced the arrival of evening. The boats all came in together, and every man and mother's son was in activity. The women took the fish away in baskets, whilst the crew of the different boats set to work to haul them up above high-water mark. I was soon in amongst them, and I watched for my father's boat. Near me was a weather-beaten Samson, who, with his crew and his boys, contrived to place their vessel in security. The next and the next seemed well provided with hands; but the furthest one seemed afraid of coming in contact with the larger vessels. This was the one I sought.

'Poor old fellow,' thought I to myself, 'you will be drenched to the skin before you get your boat safe, without some one lends you a hand; and as I'm not afraid of rubbing the skin off mine, I am just the lad to assist you.' So saying, I walked up to him, shipped the capstan-bar, and when he had made fast the rope, I hove round with the two men who formed the crew. My assistance soon placed the old boy's boat above the tide; and I was walking away to help some one else, when he came to me, and said his dame was getting his supper ready, and he hoped I would come and be sheltered from the gale. 'For,' said he, 'I know what you are from your rig; you're some man-of-war's-man turned adrift for the peace.'

'Just so,' said I; 'much obliged to you, father, I'll come.'

Well, I shouldered some of the nets, and carried up a basket on my arm, until we approached my father's old cottage, and into this we steered.

I knew my mother at a glance, and I was near throwing down nets and basket and rushing into her arms. Poor old soul! age had advanced upon her, grief appeared to have broken her heart; I could discover the features of former times, but the marks were deep in her face, and they seemed like gutters for tears. She made no reply to my father's remark about his success, but mechanically went to work to dress some of the fish. On turning round she saw me, and looked at father, as much as to ask who and what I was; 'A willing lad,' said my father, 'to assist the old. He saw the weather was getting worse, and the rain coming on hard, so he came and lent us a hand to secure the boat; and now I have made him come here, dame, for some supper, for he seems all adrift in this part of the world.'

'Oh, John,' said mother, 'if Ben had never left us, you would not have needed a stranger's help. Why, he looks something like Ben, as I'm a living woman!'

I felt as if I had touched a corpse, and a chill, a dead cold chill, ran through me. There was a mild re-echo in my mother's word, but there was a tenderness in her manner of expressing my name, which made my eyes flow like a waterfall. I brushed away the tears with my sleeve, pretending it was a rain, and listened attentively to my father's reply.

'Who knows,' said he, 'but what it's all for? He's better, perhaps, he's out of this miserable world, and has not to toil and to mope in rough weather nor in other ways to gain a subsistence. Here now, give the lad a welcome. Come, bring that tool to the table, and we'll have a fish and a potato. There, sit down, every man to his station and the cook to the fore-heet, as

like to be governed when the person who commands is one of known reputation. I know all about them, and dame will tell you that although we have been married for five-and-thirty years, yet we never have had a regular quarrel. You see I am always employed, without being at her apronstring; and that little absence is like a drizzle in a south-west breeze, in regard to affection; it tends to feed it; whereas your hard shower or your long partings put it down entirely.

'Dame did not like the match either, for Tackle had no money, and although we were better off than we are now—for to-morrow I expect to be turned out altogether for my rent—yet I could not give the young people either money or employment; for, said I, fishermen are like service—no inheritance. Dame spoke to Jane; but she cried and got into her chair near the fire, and could do nothing; she was quite beside herself—absent-like—of no use whatever in regard to the house; and she would sit by the hour, looking at the fire as if she expected Tackle to jump out of it, with her hands upon her knees—and so she would remain and do nothing; and when that's the case, depend upon it, Ben, the woman is lost—idleness is the road-maker of love. Well, it was not long after this, when I was at sea and dame at work, that Jane went off with Tackle; we heard of them at Plymouth Dock, and two days afterwards we lost all trace and have never heard of them any more.'

Here the old man stopped, and I asked if they would know her again if they saw her.

'Ay, that I should,' said my mother; 'if she was to grow as old as I am, she never would outgrow the mole on her left shoulder; that will last as long as she live.' You, Ben, have another mark of that kind, only lower down on the arm; and they seem as if God had placed them in order that an old mother might one day find her children again.'

I was just on the point of breaking admittance with the log line of my adventures, when I came a small subnubine clap they called an attorney's clerk.

'Well, Mr. Brace,' he began, 'are you going to pay these three last quarters' rent or not?—because, if you do not, ours will turn log and bug one to-morrow morning.'

'To dilly, sir,' says my father, 'I am very distressed—very, sir, indeed; I work hard and do honestly by all; but fortune does not assist me, and I have no money—this is all I have in the world,' and he showed half-a-crown. 'I know I owe my landlord more than I can pay; but I trust that his honour will not throw two poor old creatures, fast going towards their grave, upon the parish, or hasten their deaths by turning

them adrift on the world in the middle of winter.'

'Come, Mr. Brace,' said the skeleton of the law, 'fine words, you know, butter no parsnips; I have been at you every day since June, and now I'll stand it no longer, for I don't believe one word you say. Here I find you sitting by a comfortable fire, with a visitor to assist you in emptying a bottle of brandy; and I don't require the nose of a pointer to swear that you have made a jolly supper. And there's your good old woman's eyes, which speak volumes as to the attention she has paid to her consumptive friend, the almost finished bottle. I dare say she will say that maudlin eye is occasioned by the smoke; but I'm not to be done; to-morrow you will pay, or, by G—! I will seize every rag in the house, and you may turn out and wash your eyes in the rain.'

I was posted behind this land-shark, my jacket off—for they had put that to dry before the fire; my father was standing up with a look of trouble which might have melted even the heart of an attorney's clerk; whilst my mother sat down weeping like one of those dripping caves in the North of Ireland. When the wretch had finished his speech, I just took him by the cuff of the coat, and giving him a little head-way with my foot, sent him to the full enjoyment of the cold lodgings he had intended for the old folks. He had left his umbrella behind him, for which he returned.

'What!' says I, 'have you cleared for action, and come into the enemy's port to battle the watch with him? I'm for you, my hero'—and I seized him by the throat. The little quill-driver fixed his hands upon my shirt-sleeves; his face was red as a lobster, and he blustered out something about assault and battery. 'Here's assault your battery for you,' says I; and I gave his nose a broadside. He came at me, after this, twirling his hands as if he was spinning rope-yarns; but I touched him up on his figure-head, and soon darkened his toplights; for, do you see, I was young and stout, and he might as well have knocked his fists against a stone wall as against my head—for my skull had grown thick like a black fellow's. Well, it all ended by my rolling him in a dirty puddle, and by giving him a salute, which was more honoured in the breach than in the observance, as I learnt by heart.

'I hope, sir,' says I, 'there's nothing personal—but you are a d—d backbiting, dirty, dishonest scoundrel, and much better in the mud than in an honest man's house.' So saying, I shut the door, and came to an end of it.

'O! Ben, Ben, you have ruined us!' said my mother; 'to-morrow we shall certainly be turned out, and all our furniture sold; and although I could not feel angry

been so long with Nelson, he placed confidence in me, and I was made to copy many of his letters.

I have not much to say about this cruise in the *Borac*, because it was peace-time; but, somehow, Nelson got embroiled in many differences of opinion about the right of the Americans to trade. Nelson soon put his opinion in force; for, on a stated day, he seized several Yankee vessels, which, to his knowledge, had interfered with the privileges of Great Britain in trading from America to the West Indies. This being done in defiance of the opinions of the custom-house officers, and even of the different governors, all hands began to hate him, and had he left the ship his life would not have been safe. However, when the Government at home came to his side, the business, the conduct of Captain Nelson was very much applauded, and received the warmest approbation. If he had no enemies of his country to fight, he had plenty of lawyers to contend against.

Good, we are told, not unfrequently comes out of evil. Owing to the lawsuit which arose out of the detention of the American vessels, he became acquainted with the lady he afterwards married. The captains of the ships which Nelson had detained brought an action against him, and had the damages at £40,000; and they tried all in their power to arrest him. He remained in his ship, and the marshal came on board once or twice to seize him; but Mr. Willis, the first lieutenant, always bamboozled him, and he went on shore again as wise as he came.

One day, one of the lieutenants—I think it was Willis—in speaking of the confinement to his ship when Nelson was obliged to suffer for fear of the arrest, said *Zeke* said him, "*Pity!*" exclaimed Nelson; "*Zeke* did not say? I shall live, in to be a captain, at that point I shall always be a captain. And he remained captain of my ship, booting in his revenge."

The President of Nevis, Mr. Herbert, took a great fancy to him, and it was generally reported that he had offered to become Nelson's party for £10,000; but he would allow him of to be arrested. It was at the house that Nelson first saw Mrs. Nisbet, the widow of Dr. Nisbet, the lady being then only nineteen years of age, whom he afterwards married. Nelson's better fortune, under Mrs. Nisbet's guidance, was a position of fortune, with a birth, parentage, and education.

Letter to Nevis, Nov. 11th, 1785.

"My dear Sir,

"Not a day goes by but I have five or six packets from my children in England; but, however, I don't think I am forgetful—more especially when I open a business

which, perhaps, you will smile at, in the first instance, and say, "This Horatio is for ever in love." My present attachment is of pretty long standing; but I was determined to be fixed before I broke this matter to any person. The lady is a Mrs. Nisbet, widow of a Dr. Nisbet, who died eighteen months after her marriage, and has left her with a son. From her infancy (for her father and mother died when she was only two years of age) she has been brought up by her mother's brother, Mr. Herbert, President of Nevis; a gentleman whose fortune and character must be well known to all the West India merchants; therefore I shall say nothing upon that head. Her age is twenty-two; and her personal accomplishments you will suppose I *think* equal to any person's I ever saw; but, without vanity, her mental accomplishments are superior to most people's of either sex; and we shall come together as two persons most sincerely attached to each other from friendship. Her son is under her guardianship, but totally independent of her.

"But I must describe Herbert to you, that you may know exactly how I stand; for when we apply for advice, we must tell all circumstances. Herbert is very rich and very proud—he has an only daughter, and this niece, who he looks upon in the same light, if not higher. I have lived at his house, when at Nevis, since June last, and am a great favourite of his. I have told him I am as poor as Job; but he tells me he likes me, and I am descended from a good family, which his pride likes; but he also says, 'Nelson, I am proud, and I must live like myself, therefore I can't do much in my lifetime: when I die she shall have twenty thousand pounds; and if my daughter dies before me, she shall possess the major part of my property. I intend going to England in 1787, and remaining there my life; therefore, if you two can live happily together till that event takes place, you have my consent.'

"This is exactly my situation with him; and I know the way to get him to give the matter is not to appear to want it. Thus I am minded, who can I apply to but you? Therefore, if you have ever expressed for me leads me to hope you will do something. My other happiness, I give you my honour, is now in your power. If you cannot afford to be my any more for ever, you will, I am certain, try to me, that if I ever can afford it, I will return it to some part of your family. If Mr. Herbert will be brought to send me two or three hundred a year during his life; and if you will either *give me*, I will sell it—I think you will do it—either one hundred a year, for a few years, or a thousand pounds, how happy you will make a couple who will pray for you for ever! Don't disappoint me, or my heart will

'Her uncle, although he is a man who must have his own way in everything, yet, I believe, has a good and generous heart, and loves her and her son very sincerely; and, I have every reason to suppose, is as much attached to me as to any person who could pay his addresses to his dear Fanny, as he always calls her. Although his income is immense, yet his expenses must be great, as his house is open to all strangers, and he entertains them most hospitably. I can't give you an idea of his wealth, for I don't believe he knows it himself. Many estates in that island are mortgaged to him. The stock of negroes upon his estate, and cattle, are valued at £60,000 sterling; and he sends to England (average for seven years) 500 casks of sugar. His daughter's fortune must be very large; and as he says, and told me at first, that he looked upon his niece as his child, I can have no reason to suppose that he will not provide handsomely for her. I had rather wish that whatever he may do at her marriage may flow spontaneously from himself.

'I have not an idea of being married till nearly the time of our sailing for England, which I did not think was to be till 1787; but report says (which I don't believe, by the bye, but you can ask Mr. Stephens,) we are to go home this summer; but I thought it right to know every sentiment of my friends upon a business of this moment.'

What between love and law, he was obliged to take to physic; so that he flirted with the three black Graces; and anyone may see by the following letter what effect it had upon his framework.

'Nevis, July 5th, 1786.

'MY DEAR SIR,

'This will be delivered to you by Mr. Suckling, who has done me the favour of calling here on his way to England. He appears much improved since I last saw him, and seems to possess a modesty of behaviour which must ever get friends and promotion for him.

'I wish I could tell you I was well; but I am far from it: my activity of mind is too much for my puny constitution; I am worn to a skeleton, but I trust that the doctors and asses' milk will set me up again. Perhaps you will think it odd if I do not mention Mrs. Nibbet: I can only assure you that her heart is equal to her head, which every person knows is filled with good sense. My affection for her is fixed upon that solid basis of esteem and regard that I trust can only increase by a longer knowledge of her. I have not a line from either my father or sister. My brother just mentioned it in a careless manner, you did. I hope you and your family are well, and ever will continue so. You have been

my best friend, and I trust will continue as long so as I shall prove myself by my actions worthy of supplying that place in the service of my country which my dear uncle left for me. I feel myself, to my country, his heir, and it shall, I am bold to say, never lack the want of his counsel; I feel he gave it to me as a legacy, and had I been near him when he was removed, he would have said, "My boy, I leave you to my country: serve her well, and she'll never desert, but will ultimately reward you." You who know much of me, I believe and hope, think me not unworthy your regards.

'But I beg your pardon for this digression; but what I have said is the inward monitor of my heart upon every difficult occasion. Bless you, my best friend, and believe me most affectionately,

'HORATIO NELSON.

'William Suckling, Esq.'

It is nothing very new to say, that when once a man gets into love he is the most obstinate creature that walks the earth. Nelson was in love, and he married on the 11th March, 1787. I was there of course, and I saw Prince William Henry, his present Majesty—God bless him! Yes, Nelson got married and I got drunk. It's a faint heart which never rejoices; and although I can say that I never boused my jib up on board since I entered the service, yet I must confess that now and then, in order *to do honour to the service*—that is four times a year—once for Lord St. Vincent's action, or rather Nelson's bridge-building (I'll explain that as I spin out my life), the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar—I get as royal as a Scotch piper; although, when it comes to the last action, and which is in winter-time, I drink my first glass in solemn silence for the loss of my old commander, and then give three cheers for the victory.

Nelson was married, and many a man in the service thought he was ruined; for I have heard those say who know nothing about the business, 'that a man is never properly ruined until he is spliced;' but we feel, I think, as much disposed to gain high rewards when we know that the woman with whom we have shared our lives is to share in the honours; and although it may be true that in a desperate business of cutting out, a man remembers his wife and eight small children, yet few are the instances on record of a sailor proving himself deficient in courage *because* he was married.

Nelson thought that love is not to be drowned; but this opinion was written before his marriage.

'We are often separate' (this is written to the widow), 'but our affections are not by any means on that account diminished. Our country has the first demand for our services, and private convenience or hap-

trying to cut out my prize, eh? I advise you to sheer off before I pour another broadside into your legal knowledge-box.'

'Susan,' said he, 'my dear Susan, can you listen to the words of this uncouth sailor, whilst I, a man of education, with the best house in the village—with comfort, respectability, money to offer—am treated with contempt?'

'And serve you right, too,' said I, 'Mister Attorney: d— me, I'll turn ye to the right-about if you attempt to clapperlaw her.'

'Surely, Susan,' he continued, 'you are not so blind to your own interest as to unite yourself with a man whose profession is that of danger—who will no sooner marry than he'll leave you, and who, when far away, will console himself for your absence in the embrace of another; whilst I must remain where you were born and bred, you will be amongst your relations, and you will triumph over those who have taken every opportunity of traducing your character, by saying you corresponded with a sailor—a common sailor! a man whose feet hardly knows the comfort of stockings, and whose whole life is one of servitude and toil—a hem!'

'I say, Susan,' said I, 'are you going to listen to that fellow's lingo? Why, his profession is to deceive, and he is endeavouring to make you his victim. Now I am all fair and above-board, and I never told a lie to any one in my life; and if old Tapes there said as much, it would be the biggest lie he ever told. There is my hand; there, there it is for your protection, and if you like it, say the word!'

Susan had been much flattered by the attention of the apothecary and the attorney, and in justice to human nature she had become a flirt. She loved the women always the the brave, or those who follow a desperate profession; they hate your soft hands and white-clothed fellows, who seem to dabble in milk, and swallow children. There was a frankness, an open heartedness in all he did, which could not fail to please.

'If my eyes, my ears, my speech, were those of a sailor and sailor's wife, I say it myself, I should not marry. On the other hand, if I

it was going on in my heart, she told me, in the matter of her betrothed, and I felt it would be taken back from them. I—If she married the attorney, I should be the most unchild-finding fellow in the village. Till he had his due weight; Susan as the wife of a sailor and daughter of a poor, poor, poor, poor man, might be trifled; but Susan as the attorney's daughter would be envied. Susan a pretty Polly might be tossed about by the court, but Susan a Miss Tapes would be courted.

'I cannot, I cannot do anything between the attorney and the sailor, I say it myself, I

refuse it; on the contrary, although her hand was still and quiet, her eyes were speaking and communicative.

The attorney immediately proceeded to argue in favour of his client—himself; and on such a subject he was not likely to be cool. He considered me as sailors were and *are* considered—a kind of interlopers on the land; very good men to fight, get wounded or killed, receive small gains and no honour; then, when crippled, turned to the devil or the poor-house.

'Now, Miss Susan,' he began, 'I am sure you are too good a judge not to give each side an impartial hearing. The sailor there has stated his case, and concluded it by offering his hand. I shall show you the numerous objections to that not over-clean hand before I offer my own; and I am convinced that you will give a verdict in my favour. In the first place, by his own showing, his hand cannot be *yours*; it is his king's and his country's: and although I admit he could not serve in a better cause, yet it is obvious that, in his faithful service, he must neglect you. Can the man who is freezing in the North Sea, or melting in the Indies, be protecting you at Cawsand Bay, your father and mother being dead?'

'I'm very sorry for that, Susan,' said I.

'No interruptions, Mr. Sailor, if you please,' said the land-shark. 'The whole property is yours: it is not sufficient of itself to do credit to one of such acknowledged beauty; and you, from this, which is not enough, would be obliged to support him.'

'I take the liberty of telling you, Mr. Tapes—'

'No interruptions!' said he.

'Curse your raptions!' said I. 'Here goes for the truth. You tell a most infernal—'

'That is the man—gentleman I cannot call him, Susan, to whom you would listen. If in a case like this—an indifferent case to him, for we all know what a sailor's life is—he can outrage society in the way he proceeds, what pain, what anguish would it afford one so gentle and so mild as yourself, should his ungovernable rage break out and be vented on you! To a bad temper must be added lurking avarice and dirty habits. You see how warm he got when he heard your parents were in the cold grave, and you in comparative affluence. But look at that which not even love could blind,—look at that ugly swelling in his cheek!'

'It may quid,' said I.

'It will never get you a *quid pro quo*, and the shark; for no one can be overboard of a person whose gluttony distorts his countenance.'

'I had no fault to find with that thing as well as I do now; I would have

for wages, saved up for you and my father; and every time I felt to see if it was safe, I thought how glad you would be to see that I never lost sight of you, however thick the fogs of disappointment. There, Susan, take it, that's a dear, and let's make a splice of it, and pitch that shrivelled-faced attorney to his master the devil.'

Well, this is the long and the short of it—Susan was thinking about the lawyer; for when I mentioned him, she got as white as a purser's shirt on a scrubbing-day in the West Indies. She thought there was a great deal of truth in all that he said; firstly, that if she married me, she would marry merely the name, because I was so wedded to the service and to Nelson, that to sea I should go, and that I told her. Then she saw all the assistance I should be able to offer was very small indeed; and then she thought of the attorney's house, and being a gentleman's wife, instead of the daughter-in-law of a fisherman. Besides, there was Jane Mattocks, a pretty girl, who was her rival, and they had quarrelled; and when two pretty women quarrel, they are more insincere in their friendship afterwards than two tigers; they will 'dear' and 'love' it, before each other; but no sooner out of sight, than 'jade' and 'turnspit' are terms too flattering. She did not like to give me up, because I was a good-looking chap; and yet she did not like Jane to call her a sailor's wife, for she was well to do in the world—she was the only baker in the place, and she had got a nice house over her head. She told me all this, and I grew desperate. 'There,' said I—'there, Susan, is my flipper; will you have me, or not?' She looked rather astonished, and did not answer. 'Come, no shilly-shally,' said I; 'either you have me this day week, or we part company for ever.'

'I'm too young, and my aunt' (that was Jane's mother) 'says I may do better.'

'Well,' said I, 'many a time I have heard say, that "the smoother the water, the more close are the rocks; and when the sky is the bluest, the wilder the quail are the most flocky." God bless you, Susan, I won't tell a lie about the baker, and I don't uncommonly grieve at leaving you, for I don't love you. God bless you, and make you a happy woman and a good mother! I don't all the attorneys in the world can love you more than I do.'

'No no, Ben, you mustn't go, you shan't leave me for ever,' she said, 'not for all the Jane in Caw and Bay; but you mustn't hurry me, only I am vexed at a step it is for a young girl like me to take. If my aunt and the attorney manage the business, which I am used since my father's death, and I cannot marry without the consent of the family, I shall do as they say, but I shall never love any one but you.'

to-day and leave me to-morrow. Now, Ben, listen to me: if you will take off that sailor's jacket, and put on a baker's dress, I'll marry you; but if you follow the sea, you may marry Jane if you like. Make up your mind to-morrow—and now, good night!

'Give me a kiss,' said I.

'Certainly,' said she, and we parted.

'Whew!' said I, when I was clear of the port, and steering towards home—'what a craft! Never saw so much flesh and bone put so well together: she's as tight as a cockleshell, and from her figure to her cat-head she shows as bluff a bow as a French frigate; a clean run fore and aft; and as for her quarters, my toplights! a Dutchman on the Doggerbank is a joke to her.' D—me if ever I felt so queer in my life. I felt a creeping come over my flesh as if the cook's tormentors were sticking in me. I must have been cursed in love, for I never felt so dry in my life.

Well, away I went home, star-gazing whenever the clouds left them clear; and just as I came to the door I gave something a kick, which rolled over and over. I took it up, for it was a ba-let—I carried it into the house, and I soon found there was a live cargo.

'What's that, Ben?' said my mother.

'A squeaker,' said I.

'A pig?' said she.

'No—a child,' said I.

'Put it out again,' said she, 'or we shall have some trouble come upon us, especially if it should die.'

'Take it to the attorney's,' said my father; 'leave it at the door, ring the bell, and be off.'

'Let's look at it first,' said I.

My mother nodded, and we began to unpack the child, who had been stretched into a straw basket, something like the manner I once saw a peacock stowed on the top of a coach, with his tail sticking out, and in a room left for his beak to get breath. I soon released the poor thing. I saw before me the very child the woman nursed in the wagon. She had the mark I before described, and it was impossible to mistake the business. The child had a black ribbon round its neck, to which was appended a card with the name Jane Tackle.

'Hullo!' said I, 'then I must have been an travelling companion of my own sister, and never knew her. She has taken my advice long enough, and I'm heart if I allow the child to go to the attorney's. Come, mother, you must take care of little Jane, and I'll just take a skip over to Plymouth, and see if I can find the other Jane.' Mother at first did not like the business, and rather tried to get out of it; but I promised to send her a square, and to come home before that time, might yet be able to find out what she had done with the child. I then went on my way, and

a dead one; then came again the same low, dismal moaning, and I got as much a coward as the two captains in Benbow's action. 'Why,' says I to myself, 'Ben Brace, are you afraid, and Nelson's coxswain?—not a bit of it;' so I tried again. I went steadily along the house saying my prayers, when I distinguished a woman seated like under the lee of the stone, in order to shelter herself from the inclemency of the weather.

'Hulloa, messmate!' said I, 'you have got a bad berth of it here: why, you will be blown to pieces before morning.'

'Leave me,' said the woman.—'leave me to die! I have lost my child for ever; it has been taken from me; and I have waited here watching the door which encloses my infant, but is closed against me. And now, the sooner I die the better!'

I recollected the voice in a moment: it was that of the poor forlorn creature who had come down with me in the waggon, and whom I now knew to be my own sister. My heart swelled, and my voice was almost stifled: I was just able, however, to stammer out, 'Jane, Jane, com: to a brother's arms!'

'Is it you, Ben?—now I die happy! You'll be a father to it—won't you, Ben?' and she jumped upon her feet and threw her arms round my neck. 'Now—now, promise me not to let it starve, and I will go and die elsewhere.—Oh! my heart! my heart! I feel it breaking whenever I think I am to quit this place and leave it there: but I'll stay until daylight; I have been at the window twice, but I did not hear it cry; but the wind shook the small shutter, and maybe it drowned its noise.—But don't go, Ben, yet! Why don't you speak to me? Say, Ben, you will be a father to it.'

I kissed Jane, and she gave me back a hundred. She hung round my neck, and she cried like a baby; it was some time before I took her by the hand, and told her that father and mother had forgiven her, and that the door would be opened to her, and that she must come with me.

'Never, Ben—never could I look,' she said, 'upon father and mother again! they will curse me, and I shall go mad. No, never I do not know if they have cursed me—and that is some happiness. Oh! my child! my child!'

'Your mother has taken the child,' said I, 'and I have been to the ferry to search for you.'

'Then it was you that lifted the basket? Oh! how my heart failed me when I saw my child locked in the cart, and did not dare to rescue it!'

'Come along, Jan,' said I; and I dragged her to the fire-hole.—'come, Jane, and be a daughter to the old one;' and I rattled at the door. I felt her tremble, and

she sank down at my feet. My father opened the door: he could not bring a light, for the wind was boisterous.

'Here she is, father,' said I.

'Where?' said he.

'Here at my feet.'

The old man rushed toward his child; he seized her by the arm. 'Jane, Jane! do I live to see you again; to bless you, my poor lost one—to comfort you! Here's your child asleep, and here's your mother; come, cheer up!'

My mother looked at her daughter as she lay on the floor, for we had lifted her in. I got the big arm-chair; but I saw Jane shudder at the sight of it, and she hung her head down to the ground. I went to my mother and I touched her arm: 'Mother,' said I, 'your promise.'

But she looked at her daughter in a strange unforgiving manner. By degrees I coaxed her nearer and nearer; and no sooner did I place Jane's hand in hers, and she felt the touch, than she burst out a-crying and blessed her child. I never saw such a scene. There was Jane dripping wet lying along the floor; she never spoke or cried—she was dried up by grief; and there was her father, the rough old fisherman, whose life had been one struggle against the storms of heaven, now beaten, fairly beaten by a woman's silent sorrow. My mother had raised Jane's head, and placed it on her knees; whilst I stood behind my father, endeavouring to shame my tears.

Whenever I see a fellow looking calmly on such scenes of affliction, or when, in the last rattle of death, the bystander is without a tremor, I always think he must be either a doctor or a brute. We get accustomed to death, to be sure, and that is the excuse for the former; and he would make but a poor surgeon who felt the wound he inflicted. But with us—we who are paid for bang shot—why, it would ill become us not to feel for others.

Well, we got all hands to bed; and the next morning I arose with the conscience of a man who has done a good farm: I was as light as a cork, and skip I about like one of the figures we see in Punch's box. Before we pined to breakfast, I was on my road to Susan's, which was about a hundred yards from our house. She was up, and received me very kindly; she saw I was in high spirits, and asked me the reason.

'Jane's come back, Susan,' said I. 'Why, what do you look so contemptuous about? She is forgiven; and you'll come, I know, and I see it, and be her friend, as you used to be.'

'No, no, Mr. Brace,' she answered, 'that I can't ever do. Think what the world would say if I was the friend of a bad woman! I shon't be thought no better than she was. No, it must not be, and I

about the attack on Bastia. Lord Hood then resolved to reduce it by the naval force alone, and he came himself with a large part of the fleet to Bastia. Nelson was the oldest captain employed upon this service, for the admiral had left his senior officers to blockade Toulon. The only men we had from the army were a few artillerymen; and we began the siege with eleven hundred and eighty-three soldiers, artillerymen, and marines, and two hundred and fifty sailors—all belonging, with the exception of the artillery, to the fleet.

'We are but few,' said Nelson, 'but of the right sort. Our general at St. Fiorenzo will not give us one man of the five regiments he has there lying idle.'

It was on the 4th April, 1794, that we landed, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Villettes and Nelson. To be sure, we had work enough. We lugged the guns which we landed, on heights which at first seemed only to be got at by monkeys! Nelson cheered us; he was everywhere, his eye was on every one of us; and, one and all, we put a willing hand to the rope. We were constant in our exertions. Nor were our enemies idle. They had borrowed fresh courage from our delay: they built new works, and repaired the old: night or day made no difference. We saw them at work; and we perceived that one hour of wavering is a year to a besieged enemy. Their furnaces were in readiness, and it was evident that they had the greatest confidence of success; firstly, from our slender number—and secondly, from their increased fortifications. But, as we advanced our works, the enemy gradually gave way, and on the 20th May one thousand regular troops, fifteen hundred national guards, and a large party of Corsican troops laid down their arms to one thousand two hundred soldiers, marines and seamen. It was one of those bloodless victories which are gained by steady perseverance and undaunted courage.

The cartel which conveyed the prisoners to Toulon brought back information that the French fleet were all *à l'ancre*, and ready for sea; and we were soon under weigh, in company with Lord Hood, for Thiers. We saw the French fleet off St. Fiez; but the wind was so scant, that we were unable to get between them and the land, and cut them off: besides which, their boats came out from Antibes, and lent a hand to tow them within the shoals of Grapier Roads, and placed them under the protection of the batteries on the Islands of St. Honoré and St. Marguerite. We looked at them like men who wanted an action, but it was of no use; we must have waited, and that was impossible under the fire we must have sustained. They say that Lord Hood had planned an attack which would have been irresistible could we have entered the harbour.

We had just time to smell the enemy, when we were despatched to co-operate at the siege of Calvi. Sir Charles Stuart commanded the land forces; and never was there a more gallant fellow in the British army: he slept every night in the advanced battery, and whenever a shot came, Stuart heard the whizz of it. Well I remember that business! it was smoking hot; and we toiled through the day and night in dragging cannon, and in removing our sick. We had no respite from labour—and out of two thousand men, we had the half in the hospitals, and the remainder volunteers for it. Ay, very few men know what it is to be tired at all day; melted with the heat, worn out with fatigue, and then to have the darkness robbed from them; hardly to know the comfort of sleep, to be nurses by night and soldiers by day, and then to get no reward when the toil is over.

It was at this siege, which terminated successfully, that Nelson lost his eye. A shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand and gravel with considerable force in his face: some entered his eye, and ultimately blinded him, although at first he thought so lightly of the wound—if wound it could be called—as to laugh at it: he wrote to the admiral, and only allowed it to confine him for one day. I remember the nice work he made of it when he found his name omitted amongst the wounded; he did not conceal his mortification.

'One hundred and ten days,' said he, 'I have been actually engaged at sea and on shore against the enemy: three actions against ships, two against Bastia in my ship, four boat actions, and two villages taken, and twelve sail of vessels burnt; I do not know that anyone has done more. Have had the comfort to be always applauded by my commander-in-chief, but *never to be rewarded*; and, what is more mortifying, for services in which I have been wounded, others have been praised, who, at the same time, were actually in bed far from the scene of action. They have not done me justice.'

But he was not the only one who has been overlooked for his services: many's the man who gets a pension for doing nothing, or because his father was born before him; whilst others are left to rot with the rank of Lieutenant who have been service enough to make an inheritance. There was, not many years back, a man on that list who was Lieutenant in Byng's action, and who never was promoted, because his Admiral was murdered to satisfy party rancour. You might as well expect to make a marine officer a bishop, as to forward the deficient in interest. Why, I should like to add up how many years I served and never got a warrant: I might have had one afterward, but I preferred following Nelson.

Sykes, the man that afterwards, in the battle of Trafalgar, fixed the worm into a Frenchman's jacket, and hauled him overboard, shaking him off like you would a wad. It was 'blaze away, my hearties!' until down came both their tricoloured rags; and Andrews, one of our lieutenants—a man, Nelson said, who was as gallant an officer as ever stepped a quarter-deck—hoisted the English colours on board of both of them.

The rest of the French fleet escaped; but had Hood or Nelson commanded—But, avast there! we must not be throwing poisoned shot at any of our admirals! The attack was daring; the resistance, as far as concerns the two ships captured, desperate; and bravery is more shown in the advance into action than in the noise and the tumult, when a man, although a coward by nature, fights naturally. I think in that business of Napier's, who they call Cape St. Vincent, the gallantry of the action was in the determination to attack so superior a force; and none but a really brave man would have ventured on so desperate an action. Some envious men say, the Miguelite fleet did not fight: no, they did not fight as they might have done, that is true enough; but that cannot detract from the bravery of the English leader who planned the attack, and who made it almost entirely unsupported.

I have called our fight a *brush*, and I'll tell you why—Nelson called it only a *brush*—and here's his letter.

'*Agamemnon*, Porto Espedia,
' March 22nd, 1795.

'MY DEAR SIR,

'The event of our *brush* with the French fleet you will know long before this reaches you, and I know you will participate in the pleasure I must have felt in being the great cause of our success. Could I have been supported, I would have had *Ca Ira* on the 13th, which might probably have increased our success on the next day. The enemy, notwithstanding their red-hot shot and shells, must now be satisfied (or we are ready to give them further proofs) that England yet reigns mistress on the seas; and I verily believe our seamen have lost none of their courage, and sure I am, that had the breeze continued so as to have allowed us to close with the enemy, we should have destroyed their whole fleet. They came out to fight us, and yet, when they found us, all their endeavours were used to avoid an action. But accidents will happen to us as to others: a few days after the action we met with a very heavy gale of wind, which has driven the *Illusion* on shore; but we have some faint hopes she may yet be saved. Our prizes are almost retitled; and to-morrow we sail for Corsica. I beg leave to trouble you with a letter for Mrs. Nelson, and have to beg you will give my kindest remem-

brances to Mrs. Suckling, Miss Suckling, and all the family, not forgetting Mr. Rumsey and family. Believe me ever

'Your most affectionate,

'HORATIO NELSON.'

I thought Nelson would have gone mad when he saw the French fleet steering unpursued away; and when he heard the admiral say, 'We must be contented! we have done well enough!' 'Why,' said he, 'if I had taken ten sail and allowed the cleventh to escape, when it had been possible to have just got at her, I should never have called it well done. Ay,' said he, 'if I had commanded on the 14th, either the whole fleet would have graced my triumph, or I should have been in a confounded scrape.'

They made him a colonel of marines about this time, because, I suppose he had commanded so like a soldier at Calvi; and he was pleased at this, for I have often heard him say, that he 'thought he deserved it.' We were all of us now more fit for the dock-yard than the Gulf of Lions; we were miserably short in regard to numbers, and although Admiral Man arrived with a squadron from England, consisting of five sail of the line, yet the French had a vast superiority as to numbers. But we were more used to the work; we did not mind shot, as Nelson said of us, no more than peas; and we were very anxious to have another brush.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TAKING OF THE 'SAN NICHOLAS' AND
'SAN JOSEPH.'

'Should the foe bear in sight, and all hands call
on deck,

Don't think jolly sailors are cow'rd!

No—we'll teach them the old British dog, to
respect,

And bid them defiance about!

Sea Song.

MANY'S the tough yarn we used to twist on board the old *Agamemnon*, and very little time had we to sleep or play, sling the mallet. But it is often when the moon shines bright, and the ship slips through the water steadily and quietly—(like some even a thread of life, the ripple under the bows, and the bubbles as they pass, being something like the rebukes we meet with, and the pleasures which we have left far, far behind us) that some one or two, grown careless, as to rest from their constant activity, would bring themselves to an anchor under the lee of the bulwark, or form a circle before the foremast, and spin out their long stories of themselves and their actions.

I cannot stop here, however, to clear away the cobwebs of my memory, and tell the precise of a common life, for I am close on board the battle of St. Vincent.

of the fleet, and we being patched up, joined him in St. Fiorenzo Bay; we afterwards took up our old station off Genoa; and here it was that we first heard of Bonaparte, and his rapid successes, for, from the time he beat the Austrians at Montenotte, a fortnight had scarcely elapsed before the court of Turin acceded to his orders of peace, and all the strongest places in Piedmont were placed in his hands. We managed to get hold of six vessels laden with cannon and ordnance stores, which, for a time, checked the French conqueror. Captain Cockburn, who commanded the *Melager*, assisted at this business; upon this occasion we drove the convoy under the batteries, silenced them, and took the ships.

It was in 1796 that the English evacuated Corsica, and Nelson's determined manner was the cause of each English merchant securing his property, which previously had been confiscated by the new Government; and on the 14th October we had managed to save public stores to the amount of £200,000. The French, on the 20th, having landed near Cape Corse, on the 18th entered the town one hour after Nelson, and he was the last man who had left it.

Nelson now hoisted his broad pendant on board the *Minerva* frigate, commanded by Captain George Cockburn.* I went with him, of course; for I was his right-hand valet, his deputy clerk, his coxswain, and his oldest follower. We were bound to Porto Ferrajo, and we did not get there without another brush. The fact is, that we were never out of the way of old Death, and he always had his greedy paw out to catch some of us.

We fell in with two Spanish frigates, the *Salina* and the *Ceres*, and as these we attacked one of them without loss of them. Nelson counted one Englishman was slain, two Frenchmen, and consequently six Spaniards. We engaged the *Salina* for three hours, and we sent one hundred and sixty-four men to their long account. The captain, one Don Jacinto Soria, was the only officer left; Nelson shot like a lion, and, as his name was Jacob, that there was no wonder in that. Who could stand off a Stuart, either Prince or Scotch, was a fine sight like a tiger?

We did just for the prize money, with the *Ceres* brought up for a distant view of the prize and taken her and made her sail, but she had more to give enough of it. She was a frigate of the line, and had four hundred and twenty-two battle-ships and two frigates, all of which were in port. It was not a good sailing prize, so we made sail, and very caputured the ship, we got to Porto Ferrajo in safety. The whole naval establishment was with him from Gibraltar, and we were ready

in 1797), sailed for Gibraltar with a convoy. It was on the 13th February that we communicated to the admiral, Sir John Jervis, that we had seen the Spanish fleet off the mouth of the Straits. Nelson was instantly desirous to hoist his broad pendant on board the *Captain*, seventy-four, commanded by Captain R. W. Miller; and by the time I had stowed my hammock in the nettings, I looked aloft on board the admiral's ship, and there was the signal to prepare for action. I had seen that so often, that I did not want the signal-book to teach me.

At daybreak the next morning we caught sight of them, being then in the order for sailing in two lines. The morning was dark and hazy, and at half-past six the *Culloden* made the signal for five sail in the south-west quarter: at eight the signal was flying for 'prepare for action.' It wanted no officer to stimulate the men; they were warm for the business; and although *La Bonne Chienne* made the signal that the enemy's fleet consisted of twenty-five sail of the line, whilst we had only fifteen sail of the line, four frigates, a ship, and a cutter, there was not a man fore and aft the deck that did not think some of the Spaniards would be seen in Spithead with an English flag on board of them.

When I first saw them distinctly, I began to rub my eyes and look at the commodore; he was all alive and merry; he walked quickly up and down the deck, rubbed his hands, looked again, and seemed just as pleased as if he was meeting an old friend; but, when I looked out of the main-deck port and I saw a four-decker of at least one hundred and thirty-six guns, six thousand of one hundred and twelve, two eighty-four, eighteen seventy-four, making in all twenty-seven sail of the line, with ten frigates and a cutter, I began to think that we were in for a bloody business, out of which we could never retreat, and only to be won by such men as Jervis and Nelson.

The ships first discovered by the *Culloden* were, when first discovered, separated from the main body, which was bearing down to join the separated vessels. We were ordered to cut off these five ships; and the main body of the fleet becoming too far for this experiment, we formed into three lines of battle, giving up the chase to get ready for a serious business.

Every man in the navy goes through some drill exercise, but there is nothing like the drill on board of a man-of-war before the wind blows. When everything is ready for action, we God knows! are ready enough to do our duty—when we get tournaments and drillants to clip on the scabbard, and when we look about us among the old and young bipedates, then it is that a common-sense old fish or mackerel rough the bravest

* Afterwards Sir George Cockburn.

passed on to the *Santissima Trinidad*. The *San Nicholas* luffed up—and well she might, for it would have slewed any stern—and fell on board the *San Josef*, and we placed ourselves close alongside of them, making three abreast, and thus giving both of them the advantage of our generosity, whilst only one of them could return it. We were properly disabled; every rope was cut to pieces, the fore-topmast was gone, and we had not a shroud left to support a mast: but we had still a little head-way: and Nelson ordered the captain to put the helm a-starboard, and we ran on board the *San Nicholas*. ‘Boarders, fore and aft!’ was the cry. You may see the picture in the Painted Hall, with the admiral in a cocked-hat heading the boarders.

Captain Berry, who had been the commodore’s first lieutenant, led the way, and was the first man on the enemy’s mizen chains. The spritsail yard of the *Captain* having passed over the enemy’s poop, got foul of the mizen rigging, and thus steadied us. Berry was not a second without a supporter; for Lieutenant Pearson, who commanded a detachment of the 69th regiment, then doing duty on board as marines, gallantly followed the noble example, and passed into the *San Nicholas*. One of the soldiers broke the upper quarter gallery window and jumped in; and the commodore and myself were soon at his heels, having lots of our crew close behind us.

We found the cabin doors fastened; but what’s a door to an English sailor but a place to pass through? which we did in a second, without using the hinges. We pushed on to the deck, and there were our gallant shipmates in possession of the poop—the Spanish ensign down, the ship ours. The commander of her was mortally wounded, and Nelson was just in time to receive his sword. Every precaution was instantly taken to secure the prize: but we did not do it in quiet.

The stern of the *San Josef* was directly on the weather beam of the *San Nicholas*; and the enemy opened a brisk and destructive fire upon our men, now on the upper deck of the prize. Nelson saw that to remain was fatal; he must either go on or retreat. He only knew how to do one;—though the other shows the good officer, they say, more than the advance. More men were sent from the *Captain*: ‘Follow me,’ said Nelson: ‘Westminster Abbey or victory!’ Berry assisted the commodore into the main-chain, and I was alongside of him. ‘Forward, my lads!’ was the cry; but it was no use to hurry, for a Spaniard popped his head over the quarter-deck rail, and belloyed out that they surrendered. The commodore kept on the quarter-deck; and there we were sure enough, without any poking or pricking, the commander of the *San*

Josef. The Spanish captain delivered his sword; for the admiral was below severely wounded—indeed, dying.

There, on the quarter-deck of this noble ship, did the commodore receive the swords, which were handed to me;—to me,—think of that! and I bundled them under my arm as if they had been broomsticks. And what cared we then for the fire of twenty-two sail of the line which were still firing at us?—what cared we for the whole world?

Admiral Jervis, whilst we were boarding, placed his ship, the *Victory* (Lord! how my heart stops whenever I mention that ship!) in the lee-quarter of the rearmost ship of the enemy, the *Salvador del Mundo*, and poured in such a broadside, that the Spaniard, seeing the *Barfleur* coming up to pay him equal attention, struck his colours and was captured. Our other ships in the van continued to press the *Santissima Trinidad* and her supporters, which formed the rear of the enemy; but the ships which we had separated from their fleet in the morning having got together, bore up, and seemed inclined to renew the action. Sir John Jervis made the signal to heave-to, and then formed a strong line to protect the prizes and the disabled ships. The enemy, as they approached, fired a few broadsides, and then left us to walk off unmolested with the captured.

Thus ended that famous action, in which we upheld the daring character of British seamen. It was an action well calculated to give to Spain a lesson not easily forgotten, of her total inability to meet the English on the high seas; for it is said that out of a council of war held by the Spanish admiral as to renewing the action (for he could then, had they been equal to us in bravery and skill, have changed the fate of the day), only two officers—namely, the captains of the *Velago* and the *Principe Compadre*—voted for a continuance of the battle. Sir John Jervis shook my gallant captain by the hand on the quarter-deck; and although he never mentioned him in the despatch, yet in his private letters he was not backward in his praise.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ATTACK ON TENERIFFE.

‘The action was dreadful; each ship a mere wreck;

Each had either few sailors here sent;

Two hundred brave fellows lay strewn on the deck!’

—a song.

On the 10th of April, 1767, Nelson, now Sir John, to Nelson was made an admiral, and thirty afterwards took his flag from the *Captain* to the *Thetis*; and I went with him. He had offered to promote me

Your liege have the best hearts! if gratitude could have repaid Sykes, Nelson had done it; he would have made him a lieutenant; but the wound rendered him for ever unfit to benefit by the power and disposition of his admiral. He died soon after, but was always a little queer here in the head, and no wonder, for the blow would have split the skull of a negro, or a cocoa-nut; and Sykes was beyond the help of the noble hero he had saved.

This was no *brush*; it's very rarely that men are opposed hand to hand, and sword to sword; and you may guess how fierce was the fight, when the Spaniards resisted until not a man remained untouched amongst them; and I can only finish this story in the words of Admiral Jervis, then Earl St. Vincent:—'Rear-Admiral Nelson's actions speak for themselves—any praise of mine would fall very far short of his merits.' We made two more attacks afterwards; but the Spanish admirals, Mazarredo and Groves, warped their fleet out of the range of shots; and it's no use lightening old women in nurseries. Up to this time Nelson seemed to have been protected either by some angel, or John Sykes; in all the actions in which he had fought he had never been shot; his eye was done by the sand, and not by the iron: but we can't all be invulnerable.

Lord St. Vincent now dispatched us on the 15th July, the same year, in order to attack Santa Cruz in the Island of Tenerife. We had with us four sail-of-the-line, three frigates, and the *Zar* cutter; and on the 25th, at half-past five o'clock in the evening, the squadron anchored in the bay. It is an odd-looking place, that Tenerife; and you have all heard of the Peak, I suppose, which some people have seen a hundred and sixty-one miles off.

The landing-place is a small mole, and even when the wind is lightest, the surf is high and the approach dangerous; but when the trade winds have been strong it is almost impossible to land without some caution and some good management. But when the wind comes strongly down the valleys, the sea is quiet and more serene.

We had no ships within shot, so we counted that the command of the bay would be sufficient. There were a few cannon, of course; Nelson did not have collected a plan; and in a tent which was pitched on the northern side of the bay, between the fort and the town, taking the fort, and then recommend the town to surrender. Owing to the strong winds and currents, the first attempt failed; for we never got near the place until daylight, and then we thought it prudent to return. I say we, but the newspaper writers, because we were all concerned in the business, might not let the admiral nor myself wear out that period, but Tombridge commands it and he wears it.

do it as well as any man if fortune had favoured him. There is more in fortune than in valour. Every man has a certain portion of courage, and in action no man has time to be a coward; besides, the hatches are fastened down, and there is no retreat.

Having failed in the first attack, was no reason why we should fail in the second. It was on the 24th July, at six in the evening, that the signal was made to prepare. The admiral this time commanded in person. One thousand seamen and marines were to be landed from the different ships under the command of Frobridge, Hoo, Thompson, Miller, and Waller; and at eleven o'clock the boats left the ships in six divisions, and proceeded to the attack. Nelson had that night met his captains at supper on board the *Scholar*, Captain Freemantle's ship, and his wife was on board; and when the men, one hundred and eighty, had been placed on board the *Fox* cutter, and the rest distributed in the different boats, the captains took their different situations; Freemantle and Bowen remaining with Nelson, who afterwards took the lead, and gave directions as to the attack. I heard Nelson say: 'This plan is so simple, it can not be misinterpreted. I have directed them to land at the mole, or anywhere—for their way cuts the great square—and then act as circumstances require.'

It was about half-past one A.M., when we were all close to the mole, that the Spaniards discovered us; they rang their precious alarm-bell, and lights and fires were blazing in a moment. 'Cast off the tow-ropes in the boats!' said Nelson. 'Now, my lads! three, two, one, and hurra for the first on shore!' We made some noise, as you may suppose, but they made more; for they opened fire from about forty pieces of cannon, from all directions; and as for the musketry, it was as regular as the roll of a drummer.

'Give way in the boats!' shouted the hero, as we darted by them in order to be first on shore. The gallant fellows heeded not the musket-balls, the round, grape, or canister, any more than the ladies mind sword-bats during the carnival at Naples. 'Pull away, forward!—well done, abait!' was the cry in each boat; and one would have supposed it was a race who should be first at the goal, rather than in a hospital.

It was as dark as pitch, and we could not tell the mole-head from any other place, the firing was so continued, and from all quarters at once. Most of the boats missed the landing place, and I were curled on shore by the side of the mole from the first shot, and then I should have been in a bad way.

Thank God, I did not get hurt, and I was not the only one who did not.

returned them to his brother, the commissioner.

No sooner had Nelson been examined by the surgeon, than immediate amputation was recommended. I undressed him myself, and laid him down on the cabin table, making him as comfortable as possible; but the wound was one which must have been dreadfully painful, for the bone was shattered to pieces, and I never remember to have seen such a fracture before.

'I'm ready,' said Nelson, 'so, doctor, despatch. You know your business too well for me to fear, or you to cause useless pain.'

I thought I should have dropped when I saw the first cut. I watched my admiral's face, for I had mixed some wine and water in case he should require it; and I knew how grateful is the least drop when a wounded man calls aloud for drink. I have seen men at the gangway who took no immediate heed of the boatswain's mate's cut as it whizzed through the air and fell with cutting violence on the bare back; I have seen men receive dozens without expressing the slightest murmur; but when they ask for water, if it is not brought, I have heard how pettishly they continue the demand;—and that's the reason I always keep my throat moist, for I do not wait to allow my curiosity to get the better of my comfort.

Nelson's face never moved. His lips, it is true, were closely pressed together; but that, I have been told, is a strong sign of *determination*. His cheeks were pale from the loss of blood; and he appeared faint from the exertion of rescuing some of the men whom he saved from the *Bar*. Oh, how I felt when I saw the long knife, bright as the binnacle lamp, dazzling all around! Nelson looked at it; and in a moment it was down to the bone, right round and round the arm. He did not flinch from this; but just before, when the surgeon drew the skin back, he looked up. Then came the saw; and I'm blessed if the carpenter, sawing off the heel of a studding-sail beam, could have set to work with more coolness than the doctor. Off fell the limb—Nelson's good right arm—one that in the attack, a month previous, with the *Speed*'s boats, had defended its owner, and saved his life, as well perhaps as John Syke's soul.

In taking up the arteries, the surgeon, in his haste, took up a nerve, and bound the two together with a piece of silk thread; and this caused the devil's own torture for months after, which at the time did not increase the sufferings.

No sooner was the limb dressed, the knives removed, the assistant-surgeon despatched to look after others, than up gets the admiral; and 'Brace,' says he, 'get some paper and write down the despatch as I tell you.' And it's as true as the Gospel: he told me every word, and held the paper,

and read it himself, to see that it was all correct, although it was eleven o'clock at night before it was finished.

That accident of the nerve kept up a continual pain; and in those days the surgeons, according to the French practice, used silk instead of waxed thread.

Nelson became so ill after this, that he was obliged to leave active service, and he retired on his arrival in England to lodgings in Bond-street; I being his servant on shore, as I had served him on board. Upon his recovery, he went to court; and I shall not forget his answer to the king when he was presented, for I heard him relate the anecdote myself.

'You have lost your right arm,' observed the king.

'But not my right *hand*,' replied Sir Horatio, 'as I have the honour of presenting Captain Perry. And besides, may it please your majesty, I can never think *that* a loss which the performance of my duty has occasioned; and so long as I have a foot to stand on, I will combat for my king and my country!'

They now gave him a pension of £1,000 a year; and I copied out the memorial which it was necessary or customary to present. It is here:—

'To the King's most excellent Majesty, &c.

'That, during the present war, your memorialist has been in four actions with fleets of the enemy, viz. on the 13th and 14th March, 1795, on the 13th July, 1795, and on the 14th February, 1797; in three actions with frigates; in six engagements against batteries; in ten actions in boats employed cutting out of harbours, in destroying vessels, and in taking three towns. Your memorialist has also served on shore four months, and commanded the batteries at the sieges of Calvi and Bastia. That, during the war, he has assisted at the capture of seven sail of the line, six frigates, four corvettes, and eleven privateers of different size; and taken and destroyed near fifty merchant vessels. And your memorialist has actually been engaged against the enemy upward of one hundred and twenty times; in which your memorialist has lost his right eye and right arm, and been severely wounded and bruised in his body. All of which services and wounds your memorialist most humbly submits to your majesty's most gracious consideration.'

This was useful to me; for when I came to apply for Greenwich, I copied Nelson's memorial word for word, adding to it the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar*; and I got my cocked hat and breeches, with the allowances, and one small pension. It is a different thing to work handwork; and to work handwork, as the black fellows say; but no one ever heard Ben Brace grumble

ever anything was to be done I was in the way to do it. Well, one night, just as we were about Brighton, I think, and the skipper was getting a cloth or two in the wind, he says to me, 'Fearnay,' says he (you see I shipped a purser's name), 'don't you think an active fellow like you might make money enough to get a vessel of your own, and be independent, instead of brushing about after other people?'

'I beg your pardon,' said I, 'Mr. Skipper; but I don't *brush* about after other people: I belongs to Admiral Nelson.'

'Well,' said the skipper, 'he is a great man, no doubt; but he will never make an independent man of you. And only think what it is to be independent—to clap your hands in your pocket and find plenty of money, and to know where to get more! Why, according to your account, you have been at sea ever since 1770, and now we are in 1797, making twenty-seven years, and you have not got enough money, I'll be bound, to jingle on a tombstone.'

'That's wrong,' said I, as I unstowed my magazine: 'here's five-and-twenty pounds; and I have more due for prize-money.'

'Well, what's that? You know you make it like horses, and spend it like asses; and then you are obliged to slave for more. Besides, what can be worse than being at the mercy of any capricious character: to be seized up to the grating, to be flogged like a boy—to be placed in a black list—to work, and to work worse than any negro in the West Indies? And, after all, what do you gain?—twenty five pounds! Now, you are just the lad I want: you are quick, brave, intelligent, a seaman and a sailor; you might do for a lord-chancellor, for you can speak Spanish after a fashion, and I can write a good hand. If you will serve me I'll serve you; so let's have another glass, and I will see if we can't make a bargain.'

'Much obliged, I'm sure I am to you, sir,' said I; 'but I must have coffee, sugar, and lived blood, and that I can't have; but I couldn't help it, you see, and I couldn't call to one Lapeere, and ask to see you.'

'What time and how?' I pressed the skipper.

'To-day, in the day, and I'll be there, my man; for I must have coffee, sugar, and lived blood, and that I can't have; but I couldn't help it, you see, and I couldn't call to one Lapeere, and ask to see you.'

'To-day, in the day, and I'll be there, my man; for I must have coffee, sugar, and lived blood, and that I can't have; but I couldn't help it, you see, and I couldn't call to one Lapeere, and ask to see you.'

To tell the truth, I had no idea of it; he was not the sort of fellow I had ever known. He was a very different person from the manner, and he was a very different looking man indeed. His crew were more

afraid of him than of a press-gang, and whenever he was displeased, he used to say, 'I'll ship you on board a man-of-war; and then you will know what slavery is, under the glorious name of "British Sailor," "Lords of the Ocean," and "Bulwarks of England," and so on.' Well, I looked at him, and I thought I had some recollection of his features: but although I looked and looked again, and turned over the log-book of my memory, yet I could not recall to my mind that I had actually ever seen him before; and yet I was quite convinced that his features and his manner were well known to me.

When people are only half-drunk, they are either excessively knowing or confoundedly quarrelsome. Now I was never the latter; because I had had quarrelling enough with the Spaniards to last me until the admiral recovered his health; and as to the former, why I must say, that I was just in that humour to have bet I could have counted the number of patches on the skipper's counterpane without a mistake; and, therefore, giving a very knowing wink with my right eye, I remarked that I hoped it was not personal, but that I once did remember having seen a man nearly as ugly as he sold in the West Indies.

'Where, and when?' said he.

'I think,' said I—and you know how we sailors remember dates—'I think in the *del Rio*, in 1779, in Jamaica.'

He looked at me—right through me; and his eyes, rather blue nor black, seemed on fire; then they became rather dead, as he seemed to retreat in his memory scenes long since almost forgotten. Then followed one of those slight twines which crawl over the countenance when a man tells a falsehood; it is a kind of acknowledgment from the heart that it goes against the natural pulsation. I soon found that I was on the wrong track, for this fellow, and I have concluded me to a jelly, so by the way of making it up, said I, 'Why, now I come to think of it, this man is a little bit of fellow Tackle, who ought to have just his surly look and red eyes.'

'Come, Master Fearnay, no more of this personification, my dear fellow. Who this fellow was, you can't tell, but it is to think resembling me, I'm sure, is your care.'

'He was the most cursed villain unhung I ever met.'

'Now,' continued the captain; 'but there is to be a punishment and ceremony, where you are punished, on this world, to be a punishment, and a punishment, a punishment. What you join my duty?

'I'll be glad to you, sir,' said I, 'but I must have coffee, sugar, and lived blood, and that I can't have; but I couldn't help it, you see, and I couldn't call to one Lapeere, and ask to see you.'

straightforward.—You ask me to become a smuggler ; I will not. You tell me that I shall sink by myself, or swim with you : that is optional only with you ; and in this world and the next you will answer for it. But I cannot see the necessity of your adding another murder to your numbers. You have decoyed me here ; you have endeavoured to wean me from the service I most like—and you seem ready to murder me because I refuse your offer. Stop, sir, and hear me out. I see the determination already taken in your mind, but I'm not the man to look on with a white face. No ; I have faced Death too often to be afraid of him ; but I'm not fond of paying him a visit before my time. I will not join you, I repeat ; but by all that is in heaven or hell, I swear that I never will be a witness against you ! I now leave it to you to trust me, or to consult your better safety by my death.'

'Safety !' said he. 'What is my danger? You could be no witness against me. What have you seen as yet? Go look in the hold, and see if there is a tub of liquor, or a pound of tobacco. I tell you I don't care for your death a straw ; and when I die, I'll turn a black face on the world. Your own folly would be my best argument to get rid of you. There is but one man alive—ay, perhaps he is not alive—that can hold up his hand against me ; and that is that old fisherman, Brace. —What ! do you know him, that you start so?'

'I have heard of him,' I answered coolly. 'He had a son?'

'A fellow on whom,' he continued, 'I would give all I am worth to be revenged ; not that he ever injured me much, but because his father opposed my marriage with his sister. But Tackle was not the boy to be balked by such an old dotard : I prevailed over the girl and—left her. My plan is not ripe yet.—Come, drink ; and we'll talk of the business to-morrow night before we make the Eddystone.—Why, what the devil is the matter with you, young man? are you afraid to sleep?'

'I never was afraid of doing anything since I was born, but——'

'But what?' said he.

'But—' (I was going to say, 'being in the company of a murderer, and drinking out of the glass of him I could have murdered')—'being a smuggler.'

'Why, what a boy you are to be frightened at a shadow ! But let's talk of something else. I'll tell you of Jane Brace, that will amuse you. She was a pretty plaything ; never did a girl look more artless than Jane when she was sixteen. She was far above her situation, and I loved her ;—yes, Fearnay, I loved her ! I don't think I was ever blessed with a good temper, and it was made none the better for the obstacles thrown in my way ; but I was above

my situation also : I had been educated at a regular school ; I could write, and I had read. It made all my energies the greater when I saw Jane, and I resolved to marry her. I never harboured an idea against her virtue. I was then the very reverse to what I am now : it is true I was obstinate ;—but who masters his passions when in love?—who could be cool and temperate, and yet have Jane before his eyes, with all the obstacles to his union which were prepared for me? Jane told me how her mother hated—how her father despised me, and I became more resolute. At last Jane even wavered—the girl who had listened to me with delight, and to her parents with distrust. She met me at Edgecombe, in one of the many walks which look towards Plymou Sound. It was in July, and the evening was calm and beautiful : we walked until we nearly came to the projecting point which forms the bridge leading into Hamoaze. I had repeated to her over and over again my vows of love—I had formed plans by which we were to be, comparatively speaking, rich ; and she turned her large and beautiful dark eyes upon me ; but she never said she would consent, for she feared to disobey her parents, and I therefore saw the greatest barrier to my happiness.

'The sun had set, and the cool evening succeeded the sultriness of the day. The Sound was unruffled : it was a calm—a dead, still calm ; the waters met against the shore without a murmur, and the sea resembled one large mirror, in which the stars and the bright full moon beheld themselves. A kind of flush crossed my cheek ; it was the rising of unbridled passion. I succeeded ; she was mine. Her own safety, now her own inclination, was to follow me—to marry me. But I was not now so eager for the match : I felt she was in my power—to be the slave of my will ; and I was far from wishing to rivet the shackle she would have imposed upon me. During our return home I agreed to take her away that night, and I saw her to the door. I afterwards observed her sitting with her feet near the fire, her head resting in her hands, absent as to her mother's questions.

'Why, what do you fidget about for, Fearnay!—take some more brandy. Why, a woman lost and lost is no such strange event,' he said as he watched me. 'Why, what are you about with that knife, hacking my table?'

I was thinking of cutting his throat ; murder was busy at work within me ; and when I heard the incarnate villain glowing with delight over the highly-wrought description, I had nearly revenged her, and lost my own life. But I commanded myself, and I knew myself. Philosophers say

law that I was beginning to be tired of her tears, she endeavoured to become more cheerful. I then thought that she would do as well as another, and we started off to walk to Exeter. I made her carry the bag in which were our traps; and before I had got three miles out of Plymouth, notwithstanding she earnestly besought me to marry, I told her I was determined not to do so. Thus we went on until we got to Exeter; when I put her in a small lodging, and began my own career under Robert Tapes, wine and brandy merchant, who, I soon found out, was deeply engaged with his brother, the attorney, in receiving and selling the smuggled goods.

'We went on pretty well for about six months. Then Tapes sent me to Hertford to transact some business. It struck me, that as I should be there exactly three months, it would be the best opportunity I could ever get of ridding myself of the baggage by which I was hampered. I knew the parish would get me to a certainty if she remained at Exeter; so I mustered up money enough to put her in a cart, and we got without any adventures to Hertford. Here I remained for two months and some days. My business was then done, and I was to return to Exeter. I therefore bade Jane farewell; kissed and consoled her; and swore that I would always work for her and her child; and when she was a little reassured, I left her, and never have seen her from that time to this—poor fool!'

'Damnation!' said I, 'are you a savage?—have you no feeling?—are you such a devil?'

'There's the Eddystone on the starboard bow!' said one of his men.

He looked at me searchingly; then said, 'Keep her off a couple of points, and give us a haul when it bears south-west.'

By this time I had swallowed my wrath, and had resolved to dissemble a little. 'Hah! hah!' said I; 'you did her there!'

'You may say that. What has become of her I do not know or care. I returned to Exeter, then to Cawsand; was sent to Greeney, and then came and met my father's transportation; when I took to sea, and have been since shut in every way, but one, am now well to do in the world, and want such a fellow as you, young, hardy, and robust, to make me two trials first, and afterwards to take the sea business, whilst I retire to manage it on shore.

'It's a life of danger; but that danger has its charms. A woman is not worth winning when there is no opposition to the love—and a fortune is more tedious when it is made by rick, and in a cage of the law. A soldier's life is always the sweetest. Your gentleman, who is to be a better vessel for me than you are, cannot

cannot feel the glow you have felt when the enemy has struck his colours, and the prize has been gained by courage and hard work. Come, this is no time for long words; here's my hand upon it: serve me well this night—be my friend!—(I thought I should have dropped when I heard that word)—'be my companion in danger, and you shall not go unrewarded.' (I shook my head). 'What!' continued he, 'you refuse? Consider, before your word is passed;—again, will you join me?'

'No!' said I, 'never!—never!'

'Then this night,' said Tackle coolly, 'you shall see, if there is a dust, how easy it is to grin through bars, and afterwards to visit foreign parts at the King's expense.'

'There's a vessel on the larboard bow, sir!' said a man who had been placed to look out.

Tackle went forward, and I jumped into the cabin in order to get a pistol; but I could not open the locker; so I whipped a large sharp-pointed carving-knife inside my shirt; and I shivered when I felt the cold steel against my own flesh, and thought how soon it would penetrate another's. I was on deck before Tackle came aft; and I managed to stow away my only defence in such a manner as to baffle his quick eye, and to hinder its wounding myself.

CHAPTER XI.

A MURDER AND A NARROW ESCAPE.

'Different deaths all once surround us;

'Alack! what means that dreadful cry?'

Sea Song.

THE vessel which we had seen was a fishing boat, under easy sail, on the larboard tack; and I shortly saw two lights on her deck, as if by accident, and not shown at any signal.

'That's her!' said one of the seamen; and our three lights were held over the fore-quarter; then her two were shown more fully, and we shot up alongside of her, and hove-to.

'Ho! ho, ahoy!' said Tackle.

'How are you in the *Nancy*?' was the reply. 'All right from Cawsand,' continued the stranger.

'Any news from the islands?' replied Tackle; and thus finished the discourse, which consisted of so many private signals, which no one knew but the two skippers, and consequently a mistake was impossible. The boat of the *Nancy* was out in a moment, and very shortly afterwards the skipper of the trawler came on board. He took his seat by the partner by the hand, and they both went into the cabin. The conversation was in a low tone of voice, which gradually ended, and I soon found that I was

if any blood was spilt, mine should have a companion.

The night was murky and misty, and a small drizzly rain made it darker and damper. The *Nancy* bore up for the anchorage; about a quarter of an hour afterwards we did the same. The boat, for so the hooker might be called, was exactly the shape and rig of a Cawsand fishing-boat, and she might have laid alongside of any of them without suspicion; but she was evidently of a better build; and when she felt her canvas, she walked along through the water at a great rate. I stood on deck watching the land with great anxiety; and my heart beat quickly when I saw Cawsand Bay, and remarked one bright light in a house I could not mistake—it was the attorney's.

The *Nancy* was at anchor close to the shore. It was dead low water, and the sea was harmless, for the projection of the land rendered the bay smooth. Jacob had been talking to his crew, and had mentioned the plan to be pursued. One of the anchors, to which a strong hawser was bent, was cleared, and before we touched, and about a hundred feet distant from the shore, was let go, and the hawser paid overboard. As the vessel advanced, she grounded easily in the mud, and instant preparations were made to land. There were one or two men ready on shore, and the kegs, slung in couples, were thrown out, and conveyed to the shore by the crew, some of whom had jumped overboard, the water not being higher than their waists. Those on shore slung the kegs over their shoulders, and ran along to the bakehouse, in which they were to be deposited; for it afterwards appeared that Susan had given over the business, and the attorney had only retained the premises as a good slow-hole for his contraband trade.

Jacob never landed, and the tide had begun to flow before I thought of my own welfare. I got a bright look-out, and availing myself of a moment's inattention of Master Jacob, I was over the bows before he could get any of his crew to stop me. He called to those on the mud to seize me; but I was not bound to Guernsey then. I stepped over the water like a fisherman; and when the first person put his arms out to hold me, I came the end over him, and slipped through his fingers before he could clutch me. I did not want to fight; there was no part of my plan, because I should have been overmanned or detained; but I wanted to get clear off; and from these devils I did escape, but not without a slight exchange of blows, they were too eager to get off themselves to chase me far, and I had had quite enough of their company.

When I found they were not in chase, I began to walk rather slowly towards my father's house; and it was well I did. The attorney was still in my shirt; and a man who

has had such an escape never likes to throw away the friend on whom he principally relied. When I turned the corner, I saw a man listening at the window; and I knew him in a moment to be Tackle.

'Now,' said I to myself—'Now, Ben, you may bring him to action without fear; for he is blockading a port which is a hostile port, and in which he has committed a piracy.' So I walked up gently behind him, put one knee against his back, and before he could recover the haul I gave his collar, he was on the ground, and none the easier for the heavy fall. I knelt upon his breast, and fixing my left hand in his neckerchief, I gave it a twist which would have made any man believe the finisher of the law was at work.

'Now, you cursed red-headed villain!' said I, 'you are mine! Look at me, you murder-seeking smuggler!—look at me! I am Benjamin Brace, the brother of Jane whom you deserted. Now, d—n you! I'll cut your throat!' and I pulled out the carving-knife. He struggled fiercely, and his strength was tremendous; but I tightened the nip about his throat, and his face was as black as a lobster. 'Lie still!' said I, as I found I could master him. 'Listen to me. She is there, close to you, and awake, for I heard her. Not if she were here kneeling to pray for you would I forgive you, but upon one condition; and I'd bleed you into weakness in order to ensure that. Will you marry her? will you make an honest woman of her? will you be a father to your child?—or will you now—answer, for delays are dangerous—have your throat cut with your own carving-knife?'

I spoke loud, for I was in a high passion, and I only slackened my hold in order that Tackle should not die outright before he gave an answer. He hesitated, and I was about to finish him, when I found my neck encircled by my sister's arms.

'Forbear, forbear, for God's sake! and let not your father at his last gasp know that his son was a murderer. I knew your voice, Ben, and I knew his. Release him, —for Heaven's sake do not harm him! he is — he is—my husband!'

'Avast there, Jane,' said I; 'he has told me the whole story. No; if he was your husband, I could not kill him; but as Tackle, the dishonest fellow who ruined and left you, as a man who has confessed a murder, as a—Avast there, Ben! I promised not to hold up my hand against him on that score. Listen, you red-headed ruffian! Will you marry her?'

'Say yes, say yes, Tackle, and I'll forgive you all the miseries you have inflicted on me; all the shame you have heaped upon me. Say yes, and I'll marry you to-morrow — I'll be to you a good and faithful wife.'

I was so overcome at seeing Jane, who

slowly and cautiously moved towards the dead, a loud shriek paralysed my limbs, and I saw the child striving to shut her mother's eyes;—the cold, glassy stare had frightened her. My father was sitting upright;—the child shrieked on seeing me, and ran to my father, covered with its mother's blood. One spark of life remained in him to whom she ran for refuge; he, with all his last energies, leapt from the bed, and fell a corpse upon the floor!

I stood like a stone—I did not dare to move, and the child shrink down behind my father. I roused myself with some effort and placed my father on the bed: I lifted Jane there also, and stretched them both, then drew the sheet over the father and daughter.

I then turned to the child, but it was gone. I had no heart to call it from the seclusion it had chosen. Death is awful to men—to us who know it, who are familiar with it, and I did not like to frighten the child; so I began to speak as if my father still lived, calling myself Jane's brother, the child's uncle, his son. I heard a rustling behind the screen, and when I had stirred the dying embers of the fire, I told little Jane to come to me; and she came. The sight of the blood scared her and frightened her. I kissed her and fondled her; children know when they are liked more instinctively than men, and infants will run to those who really love them, whilst the words of those who endeavour to express what they cannot feel are discovered in a second.

The child kept her eyes upon the bed, and I was not bold enough to look upon it. I knew that the removal of the sheet would show only the dead; I therefore consoled the child, who shivered with cold, and taking it into its own sleeping-place, I sat by her until she fell asleep. Oh, happy innocence! who could this slumber where murder had been busy in the hand of man, and where the arm of death had been extended to the sick-bed!

I came back to the front room and needed a large fire; for the night was cold, and darkness I could not bear. To go out was impossible, for I thought of the child. I sat down in Jane's chair, and keeping my eyes fixed on the fire, I endeavoured to cheer up my heart and feel like a man. It was then I became aware that some people were close to the door; I heard voices, and I was at once aware of the danger of my situation; for Tackle must have been certain that he had shot Jane and not me, since she fell; and I followed to wound him. The pistol had dropped from his hand as he retreated; and my conscience I had secured. As, therefore, the object of search, in this respect I was safe. I began to turn in my mind the best method of keeping secure, and did not know I was

lulled the child to a sounder sleep, and placed it in its own bed; I then put a chair, on which I hung a blanket, between the fire and the window: the blaze of the wood had expended itself, and the light was barely sufficient to make darkness visible. I first looked to the door; it was fast, and required very little more to render it difficult of being forced. I then got up to the shutter, and I overheard the following conversation, the first speaker being Jacob: no one could mistake that ruffian.

'We must have him somehow: Tackle is dangerously wounded, and the woman shot. We must get at him. Is he in here?'

'Ay; I saw him go in and take the woman with him.'

'Listen!' continued Jacob; 'do you hear any one snoring?'

'No; all is as still as death.'

'Is old Brace alive yet?' continued Jacob.

'Yes,' was replied by a strange voice: 'but he is not likely to live long.'

'And the child?'

'It is still alive also.'

'Then we have three alive in the house, even if the woman is dead. What o'clock is it?'

'Nearly five: it will be daylight at six; or, at any rate, many of the fishermen will be stirring.'

'Then we must be quick, finish him, and get on board as soon as possible. Tackle is off in the hooker, and will not wait beyond daylight; then the custom-house sharks may overhail the *Nancy* from stern to stern and be none the wiser. Did Tackle take his pistol aboard with him?'

'No; he said he had dropped it.'

'We must search for that; it would be strong evidence. Look round the cottage, and see if there is no way in besides the door.'

When I heard this, I cleared for action. I saw I was the object, and I knew that if Jacob had only the crew of the *Nancy*, he had not more than three in his gang; but these such fellows! big enough and ugly enough to fight a Norway bear. As the front was secure I thought it was no time to stow away like a frightened child; so I lit the remains of a candle, and binding the light for fear of disturbing the child, I carefully navigated my castle of defence. I was secure enough behind for the door: when for that way was more secure than the front. As I looked round the room, I saw one of the child's playthings. It was composed of eight or ten pieces of flat wood painted on both sides, which when you turned the top one over, the rest followed the example, making a slight clatter. Thus I fished on the latch of the door; so that if they had raised that, the plaything would have warned me of it. With this tool I unlocked the door, and returned into the front room.

'I'm a constable, and desire the door may be immediately opened.'

'Very sorry, sir, I can't obey your orders. If you think I'm a murderer, you can watch the house until daylight: I can't fly away, or get through the keyhole, like Jacob's friend's finger.'

'Then we must burst the door open.'

'The poker is still red-hot.'

Jacob found I was resolved not to be taken by surprise; and, after one or two more attempts, he and his ruffians withdrew. I then got an hour's sleep, and when I awoke it was broad daylight. My own danger had interfered with the affection I bore my father and my sister: the dead were beyond human vengeance, but I was not. Now came in full array against me all that the malice of my enemies might invent; and yet I felt a security from knowing all concerning the place the smugglers had chosen for the safe stowage of their contraband articles. I went towards the bed, but I was afraid to look at those who so coldly occupied it. I dressed the child, and, as well as I could, I made myself look decent. I then opened the window-shutter: there was only one man in the street, and he was an old beggar. Tapes's house was not far distant, and I resolved immediately to run to him, for I did not know how to act. He was the only attorney in the place I knew of; for I was ignorant then of the fact that attorneys, like parrots, always fly in pairs: one man can't quarrel with himself, and one attorney will never get on without another of the same class to keep up the ball of contention. I took the child with me; and as I went along the street, I was struck by the appearance of a neat house, with a brass knocker, and with a large brass plate, on which was engraved, 'Crimp, Attorney.'

'You're the man to my mind,' said I to myself; and I knocked at the door. I saw the old beggar run away like a hare. 'Hulloa!' said I; 'I smell a rat.'

It was not eight o'clock: Crimp was asleep, and his dirty maid had hardly unbuttoned her eyes, although her tongue seemed to have been prepared for any conversation.

'Is your master up, Molly?' said I.

'Molly yourself, Mr. Sutor, my name's Martha,' said she.

'Why, you're like a Yankee,' said I; 'you never give an answer. Is your master up?'

'Yes, to be sure he is, up-stairs in his room.'

'Come, Martha, my pretty girl,' said I, 'will you tell him that I want to see him on very particular business—tell him it's a murder.'

'Lord have mercy upon it!' said she; 'and the blood's upon you now!' And she banged the door in my face, running away, screaming, like an enraged cockatoo, that her throat was cut.

'I wish it was!' said Crimp, coming downstairs. 'Who is this fellow?' said he as he opened the door.

He was dressed in a bed-gown, with a white nightcap, and looked for all the world like an Italian butcher.

'Sir,' said I, touching my hat, 'I am come to you for advice how to act. My sister has been murdered, my father is lying dead in the same bed with her, and men are seeking my life. I could not go to Mr. Tapes, for he knows more about last night's business than he ought.'

'Come in,' said he. 'Tapes concerned for the defendant, I suppose? Good case—quarter sessions near at hand—advice, six-and-eightpence. Let's hear all about it. Pretty child that!—old Brace's granddaughter. How is he?'

'Dead!' I answered.

'Dead?' said Crimp. 'Poor fellow!—happy release—lost his wife, honest woman!—honest man! has a son, far away of course. Why don't you begin, my man?'

'Because I didn't think it right to interrupt your honour. I am old Brace's son: I arrived last night.' I then told him everything connected with the business, from the time of my leaving London, sinking that part which referred to the place where the cargo was placed, because I thought of Susan, and I could not bring her into trouble.

'Glorious!' said Crimp: 'a beautiful case!—most delightful murder! Old Tapes concerned; I've got him now! Send for the coroner—settle him, and take his business—I mean Tapes of course.'

In a small place like Cawsand Bay such an event was not likely to remain long a secret. Martha had overheard it, and before Crimp's boy could have got to the ferry to cross to Dock to find the coroner, every soul in the town knew all about it. The house was beset with people, and loud and general were the abuses against Tackle. That he never had intended to shoot Jane, I knew; but that his intention was to commit murder was equally evident. Hundreds came to see the murdered daughter, on whom, when living, the breath of scandal rested, now stretched upon her last earthly bed, by the side of that good man who had, although poor and of humble birth, led the life of uprightness in this world. Now the voice of envy was stilled, and the faults of Jane were forgotten in her sufferings, in the death she had received from the hand of her betrayer.

In the meantime Jacob and his party were not idle. Jacob himself proposed to give me a handsome sum of money to be off; but I declined, again saying that in regard to the smuggling I would never hold up my hand against him. Tapes ridiculed the whole business: he declared it was an affair

gler, the goods being found on his premises, the boy's evidence being conclusive against him. Crimp rose in estimation upon the wreck of Tapes; and Susan—poor dear Susan!—soon changed her fine house for a hovel near the county gaol.

By the kindness of one or two of the gentlemen, who saw how I took the murder to heart, and who felt interested about the child, I was saved much expense in the decent funeral of my father and sister; and as I turned from the grave, I felt myself alone in the world, without friend or relations: I was the last of our name, for the child had hardly a legal right to it. I dropped a tear as I put the key of the cottage in Crimp's hand; and leaving him to arrange matters in that respect, I left Caw-sand with the child, and crossing to Dock, soon returned to London and to the admiral.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEMPEST.

'Source the foul hurricane was clear'd;
'Source winds and waves had ceased to rattle;
When a bold enemy appear'd,
And, dauntless, we prepared for battle.'

DIERCK.

WHEN I got to town, I went of course to the admiral's: I knew he would be over-
come by the sight of a pretty girl bereft of
parents and of friends. Your parents some-
times tell us that there are visitations of
Providence, and that a death in a family is
the vengeance of the Lord. I don't believe
a word about it. We are here to-day and
gone to-morrow; and if one as like the
clergyman, it stands to reason that it must
have been predestined that Jane was to be
by the hand of Tackle; and if it was so
arranged and so ordained, then Tackle
could not help it, and he is not responsible
for the deed! And nobody will per-mee-
me of that.

I asked if the admiral was at home, and
the maid told me he was. So I ran up to
my room, and getting some fresh robes, I
over my mantel, and washed the child's
figure-head, I took her by the hand and
walked into the room. Nelson was writing;
but hearing the door open, he looked up
and said, 'Ah, Brace! you are just re-
turned in time. Why, what the devil be-
comes at the child.'

'It's so that I have no family, your
honour; my father has been so long at sea
her husband—I did not like to hurt his
reputation when the story came of his
slime, and in a good sense I was obliged
first lie I ever told the admiral that my
father and me were the last of our name,
here alone in the world, and with no es-
honour I have no friend.'

Nelson got up. 'The voice in which I had
summed up my losses had found its way to
his heart.

'Come here, my little cherub,' he said.
'What's her name?'

'Jane, your honour,' said I.

'Jane,' said he, 'come to me, and I'll be
a father and a friend to you.'

Nelson looked at the child with the fond-
ness of a good man: he patted her little
head and played with her hair; then he
placed her on his knee, and began coaxing
her to speak. The child grew fond of him
directly; and ever after that, until we
sailed, little Jane was much noticed by the
admiral and Lady Nelson. Both seemed
to like her; and when we parted to sail
for the Straits again, Lady Nelson pro-
mised that on our return Jane should be
able to write, in order to stand secretary for
her uncle, who, she said, one day might be
like her husband. That was a compliment
I treasured up in the store-room of my heart.

It was early in the year 1798 that Nelson
hoisted his flag on board the *Vanguard*;
and there was Ben Brace a sort of pet
spaniel on board. I was a kind of servant,
secretary, and quartermaster, and in action
was stationed at the signals. We had a
convoy under our charge, and sailed on the
9th of April for Lisbon, in order to join
Lord St. Vincent. I remember, when we
parted from Lady Nelson, that the admiral
gave Jane to her care with words of great
tenderness.

Well, we sailed, and joined the com-
mander-in-chief on the 20th off Cadiz. We
were then sent off Toulon to watch the
French fleet; and we had with us the
Orestes and *Alexander* of seventy-four guns
each, the *Emerald* and *Terpsichore* frigates,
and the *Bonne Citoyenne* sloop-of-war.

The French had in Toulon thirteen ships
of the line, seven forty-gun frigates, twenty-
four smaller vessels of war, and about two
hundred transports; they were fitting out
under Bugeaud, who was then determined
to take Malta, and afterwards land in Egypt.
Our business was to watch these marauders,
and to be ready for another brush upon any
occasion. Well, we had a brush; but it
was not with the French—it was with the
Clod of the Weather.

We had got into the Gulf of Lions; and
a pretty place it is for a gale of wind! for
it seems to me as if it never stopped blowing
and came from one year's end to another.
It was on the 24th May, and it sprang up
about noon. We old sailors, who have
been both our lives in those seas, know that
a storm is lying up after twelve o'clock in
the day, and begins gradually as the sun
goes down, in the night we shall hear it
pretty early. At first the breeze came
from the north-east, and then chopped
round to the north-west. About three P.M.,

told by the coxswain, the valet, the under-secretary, the follower, the signal-man of Sir Horatio Nelson: and I flatter myself—not that I want a certificate from any one—that I signalized myself.

No sooner had the squadron joined us, than it was 'Hurrah for the first man who sees the French fleet!' At daylight, we had half the officers, with their glasses slung over their shoulders, scudding up to the masts-heads, and sweeping the horizon as we did the seas. We had no directions from Lord St. Vincent what course to steer: the admiral knew that he had given the command to Nelson; and although one or two older officers complained of this favour and affection, yet St. Vincent knew that he had placed the honour of England in hands well able to maintain it.

The first news we had was, that the French fleet had surprised Malta, and that the place had surrendered. The consul at Messina told the admiral, that owing to the treachery of the Grand Master and some of the Knights of Malta, Bonaparte had been successful. These foolish knights contrived, by various means, to prevent any opposition being made by the garrison;—the batteries were unprovided with ammunition—the cartridges were filled with sand—and the shot (to be sure, without powder, shot are not of much use), were too large for the guns. Yet Bonaparte pompously styled it—'one of the most brilliant exploits of the French nation!' We were a day after the fair in that quarter—the mischief was done; we therefore steered towards the Archipelago; the French fleet having left Gozo on the 16th of June, and it was the 20th when we arrived.

It was a time of great excitement. We knew our enemy was out of his harbour; we knew that Nelson would not allow any opportunity to escape; and the daily exercising of guns, flourishing cutlasses, and twirling boarding-spikes, gave us clearly to understand that if we did meet the French fleet, an action was determined on. Yet, in spite of our look-out (for we afterwards learnt this), the French fleet, amounting to all to nearly 100 sail, passed us during the night of the 22nd, within four miles. They must have huddled together like sheep in a squall, or we should have pointed on a straggler, and had them either taken in tow, or at anchor.

On the 28th of June we arrived off Alexandria: but the French were not there, neither could we get any information relative to them. The governor expected them, and was repairing the fortifications, and getting everything ready to give them a warm welcome. We passed away for Camaranah, the harbour, and all the officers looking like those people who are on a course. Still the enemy were everywhere; on the one eye of the admiral never closed.

We steered along the southern side of Candia, carrying all sail night and day. Nelson often said he should have liked to try Bonaparte on a wind: he had beat us at Vado Bay, but I'm blessed if we would not have beat him out at sea! Well, night followed the day, and day followed the night, as the boatswain used to say: but there was no French fleet that we could find. The ships required a supply of water; and we were obliged to put into Syracuse, in Sicily, in order to get some of that stuff, which is only good for shaving, on board.

We might have been there now if it had not been for a lady. We sailed on the 25th of July from Syracuse, and made the Gulf of Coron on the 28th. Troubridge stood in for intelligence, and returned making the signal that the enemy had steered to the south-east four weeks ago. Well, we before-the-mast-men thought that a month was a long time. I have known a frigate come from the Havannah in eighteen days; and it is on record that the admiral on the Newfoundland station breakfasted in his own house one Sunday, and dined with the admiral at Portsmouth on the next. So that, when we put that and that together, we smoked our pipes in the galley, and cocked our eyes at each other, as much as to say, 'Catch a weazel asleep! Bonny is off to Jamaica before this, and has drunk cocoa-nut water at Barbadoes.'

The admiral was as pleased as if he had found them; he walked quickly up and down the quarter-deck, rubbing his hand against the side of his trousers, his face jumping about like Sykes when he was electrified. We had just given it up for a bad job: but the admiral bears up, spreading out the studding-sails, and making the mate of the watch heave the log every quarter of an hour to see how much faster we went. We steered from Alexandria, carrying on until the masts groaned, and sailing close together, every morning keeping the look-out ships well distant from us, and in the evening collected the squadron together. 'If the French are on the seas,' said Nelson, 'I'll find them, or it shall not be by repairing the spars or saving the sails.'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BATTLE OF THE NILE.

At the battle of the Nile.

Our children shall smile.

As I tell of your uniform war deeds Nelson's
 perils and triumphs.

1802.

It was on the 1st of August—the 1802—1st of August—England will remember that day, and so will France, as long as domination exists. Flood in the *Zulus*, who

ad took his station on the larboard side of the *Spartiate*.

Well, it was no small mortification to be looking on so long; but it was now our turn. Nelson, aware of the impossibility of the rear of the French line, which were to leeward, coming to the assistance of their van, resolved to double his force on the van, in order to destroy it at once; and he, having his own permission, set the example to the rest of the fleet, and anchored on the outside of the enemy's line, placing them by this manœuvre between two fires. The *Vanguard*, with half-a-dozen ensigns flying, steered for the larboard side of the *Spartiate*, anchored within half-pistol shot, and opened a fire which soon silenced that ship, although we suffered terribly, for the raking fire of the *Aquilon*, the next ship in the French line, was hot and well directed; but Captain Louis, in the *Minotaur*, anchoring between the *Aquilon* and the *Vanguard*, relieved us, and soon settled the affair with her opponent.

There I stood, with a spy-glass under my arm, on the poop of the *Vanguard*, reporting the ships to the admiral as they came into action: and it was with no small pride that I saw the *Bellerophon*, Captain Darby, run along the line, and drop her anchor close alongside the *Orient*, of one hundred and twenty guns; the latter being the flagship of the French admiral, Buys; and boldly and gallantly was it done. Captain Peyton, in the *Defence*, followed close in the *Bellerophon's* wake, and taking his station ahead of the *Minotaur*, the line remained unbroken. He had on his larboard bow the *Franklin*, of eighty guns, which ship carried the flag of Rear-Admiral Bannquet. The *Alajés*, Captain Westcott, got foul of one of the ships astern of the *Orient*, and suffered severely from that ship's fire: she was soon cleared, and got into action with the *Heureux*, on the starboard bow, and the *Tonnant*, of eighty guns, on the starboard quarter, the eighth and ninth ships of the enemy's line. Four other ships of the English squadron had yet to come into action: they had been despatched to reconnoitre Alexander's position; but the discovery of the French line, as they were going, put away at the post of van, where they often began; and now, having found more than seven, it required him no patience to wait the shoals, when they saw the fierceness of the action, and, like our own, were anxious to make castles in the air, and the enemies.

The *Orient* was about two leagues astern, but was the strongest ship of the detached squadron. The night was dark, but Troubridge was completely directed. The lead-man called times during the night, and no man could have imagined that, between the soundings of eleven and the time reported to gather in the mid-side, especially when directions had been given to "draw quick,"

the ship would be on shore. But so it was with the *Culloden*: neither could all the exertions of the crews of the *Leander* or *Mutine* relieve her from her situation in time to share in the action. Just think what a man like Troubridge must have felt, when he heard the roar of the guns, the blaze of the musketry, the lights of the English fleet,—(we had each of us four,)—the noise, the tumult.

Well, the *Culloden* served as a beacon to the following ships: and it must have been some consolation to all the gallant fellows on board of her, that although they were hard and fast, they warned the rest of the danger, and thus the other ships got safe into action. The *Cullodens* could bear it; they were all tried men; their captain was as brave a fellow as ever drew breath, their officers heroes.

Hallowell, in the *Sagefire*, kept further away from the reef, and seeing a dismayed ship drifting out of the bay, imagined it might be an English ship: and it was the *Bellerophon*, who had been overpowered by the *Orient*, her masts and cables cut away, two hundred of her crew killed and wounded. She was going out of the action, although every heart on board of her yearned to get her into fire again. Hallowell occupied the space she had vacated, never firing a shot until his sails were clewed up and his ship anchored in her station: whilst the *Alexander*, Captain Ball, boldly and nobly supported him. Then came the *Leander*: Troubridge had despatched her to Nelson's assistance. She endeavoured to anchor athwart hawse of the *Orient*; but the *Franklin* being so close to her as to render this impossible, Captain Thompson took his station ahead of the latter ship, thus taking the two ships of the two French admirals.

Now, then, it was a fair field and no favour. The French fought well, but this doubling system quite surprised their intellects. Such was the destruction, that before a quarter of an hour had elapsed the two van-ships of the enemy's line were untraced; and although ships do not want men when they are at anchor yet no sailor fits as well in a floating hulk as he does when he is on board a ship, and yet is not so much exposed to the confusion, and confusion is the result.

The action was now in the centre of the line. The *Orient*, *Leander*, *Franklin* and *Minotaur* were fighting like fury to recover the day, or night, whichever you like to call it. The *Bellerophon*, having been blown almost to pieces, crept up the French's side, and those who know anything of that matter know that no men fight better when a little success has driven them with conquest, but in a retreat, or when they begin to waver and hesitate: they go off like chaps

at it, and then handing it to me, said, 'Come, Brace, some more of the old work; you'll never be able to carry all these under your arms.'

It was about nine o'clock—the victory was certain: the van of the line had Englishmen on board of them; the firing still continued along the line, but the result was unquestionable. The admiral was below, when a noise—a loud, busy noise—announced that the *Orient*, the French commander-in-chief's ship, was on fire. It's an awful sound, 'Ship on fire!' on board a ship, and all eyes immediately were turned in the direction. I left the admiral all alone: his head was bandaged up, the skin replaced, so that he saw well enough out of his larboard hawse-hole,* and I ran on deck to get all intelligence I could.

It appears that the French admiral, little dreaming that this action was likely to have taken place where he was moored, had been painting his broadside, which the *Bellerophon* afterwards spoilt. The paint-pots were all about the decks,—and new paint and oil are not like the newly-discovered dresses in which a man may walk in a fire without being singed. When this blaze was first observed to have broken out in the after-part of the *Orient*, Captain Hallowell desired all the guns that could be spared from accommodating the *Franklin* to be directed to that part of the *Orient* which was now on fire; and he called Captain Allen of the Marines, and ordered him to continue his musketry only in that direction: this was done to hinder the French from extinguishing the flames. The crew of the *Orient* slackened their fire, although they blazed away from the lower deck to the last, in order to put out the blaze on board of their own ship; and our increased energy, all in one direction, made the slaughter more serious.

The admiral, who had fought like a Frenchman—and like a gallant one too—had already received three serious wounds; yet he kept his station, and animated his men. A round-shot from the *Swiftsure* cut him in half, and he was spared the terrible termi-

* A very intelligent friend of mine, and one who has kindly marked some errors in the first edition of this work, has a marginal note added by himself in reference to this expression. He declares it is not nautical, and that a sailor would have said 'glimmer,' or 'toplight.' The editor of Ben Brace's life and adventures differs from the learned captain; to whom, of course, at his apoplexy for daring to think contrary to such successful authority. The Maltese vessels have generally the hawse-holes of their ships painted to resemble eyes; on their stern, where, if hawse-holes were placed in boats, they would be in the same place, no eyes. The Chinese have eyes in the same place, and I am fearful the gallant officer when he adixed the note saw with justified eyes. I cannot, however, become his pupil on this occasion, as, notwithstanding I admit his note to have been an eye for an eye.

nation of the battle. Casa Bianca, his captain, fell by his side. The confusion was dreadful; the flames spread far and near; for the fire of the *Swiftsure* was so well directed, and the slaughter so great, that even Frenchmen quailed before the increasing and devouring element. Many jumped overboard to avoid what they saw was inevitable; whilst the flames spread along the decks, and darted up the rigging like the quick rocket in its ascent, leaving behind it a stream of liquid fire.

In vain now did many supplicate for mercy; the steady aim of the *Swiftsure* soon thinned the number who yet nobly, but fruitlessly endeavoured to remedy the evil. The water closed over many who sought it as a refuge; whilst the roar of the guns, the unceasing rattle of the musketry, the cracking of the wood, the rush of the blaze, overcame any shriek which the sufferers might have uttered.

At this moment, one sound, louder than the loudest thunder, deadened even the fury of the combatants; and each ship experienced a tremulous motion as if an earthquake had occurred. The *Orient* had blown up; and such was the startling effect of this dreadful explosion, that those whose blood boiled with the heat of victory were paralyzed by the sudden crash, and they left the work of death to gaze on that of destruction. The glare of light illuminated the Bay of Aboukir. The darkness of the night had before rendered the position of the four last ships which came into action doubtful; but now the terrible blaze made night a day,—every ship, every flag was visible. An awful, a death-like silence succeeded the fearful event; and not a soul whispered his fears, not a voice even shouted the name which flew on the tongues of all, until mast after mast, and spar after spar, fell with their loud splash into the water, and broke the silence. Never has man seen a sight its parallel.

I turned to see who it was that rested his arm upon my shoulder—it was the admiral. He had, unobserved, reached the deck; and his voice first broke the silence on board the *Vanguard*. 'The boats!—the boats, Berry! Be quick—send them instantly to rescue the crew, if possible!—Brace!'

'Sir,' said I, turning my head.

'The signal-book instantly.'

I left him, and he stood amongst his own crew hardly recognised: the scene they had just witnessed had destroyed even the discipline of an English sailor; and you know what a sound it must have been to have shaken the brains of the forward men, so that they stood by their admiral without noticing him.

The boats of our ship, and those of the other vessels near the *Franklin*, saved about seventy of the *Orient's* men; many more

one of them, 'that it was no wonder the English officers could maintain such discipline and order, when it was possible to impress the minds of the men with such sentiments after a victory so great, and at a moment of such seeming confusion.'

The Arabs had been looking on at the action, and, like all wise people, declared for the conquerors. You see, in life it is just the same all over the world: it is not every man who sticks by an opposition when he can get into office by changing his words a little; and these Arabs, directly they found we were masters, for the three following nights the whole of the coast, as far as we could see, was illuminated by the very men who would have speared us and cooked us the day before.

The 3rd of August came, and every ship had been secured but the *Timoleon* and *Tonnant*: they were both dismasted, and could not escape. The *Timoleon* was aground; and her captain, after setting her on fire, escaped with his men on shore. The *Tonnant* refused to submit, and consequently the *Theseus* and the *Swiftsure* were sent to settle the business in another manner: and no sooner did the captain of the Frenchman perceive what was approaching him, than he did what he ought to have done before—surrendered without resistance: for what is the use of giving trouble when nothing can be gained by it? He had cut his cable and drifted on shore; but Captain Milner soon got her off, and she was secured in our line. Captain Berry was sent in the *Leander* on the 5th to Lord St. Vincent; and Captain Capel was directed to land at Naples and proceed overland.

For days afterwards we were employed burying the dead: every now and then bodies could be distinguished floating in the bay; and when the morning gun was fired, you jumped one or two to inquire how the action was going on. We were obliged to be quick at the grave-digging line, for the stench was so horrible that we apprehended a pestilence.

Of course, the admiral expected votes of thanks from everybody, and presents from half the crowned heads in Europe; but he never expected one which, after all, although a queer gift, was the most suitable, and when Captain Halowell sent him a coffin made of the main-topmast of the *Orient*, which was fished up with a part of the wreck of that ship, a ding, that when he (Nelson) had finished his military career in this world, he might be buried in one of his own trophies, he had it stuck up in his cabin, and I had to dodge round this death-box sometimes in the dark, not much to my liking or my amusement.

After the 10th, we captured us at the time, some of the crew had been killed. We picked up the *Genève* off Cape Passaro

when I was in the *Foudroyant*; and the same ship—but I was on shore in Sicily with the admiral, he was a lord then—took the *Guillaume Tell*, of eighty-six guns and one thousand men, and she was the last remaining ship of the French fleet which was in the action of the 1st of August. To be sure those Frenchmen picked up the *Leander*; and well the fight was kept up. Captain Thompson fought right well, and we had the satisfaction, when we took the *Genèreux*, to repay them for some of their incivilities to Sir Edward Berry and the crew of the frigate which Monsieur Lejoille—Mr. Jowl, as we used to call him—and his precious gang of robbers were kind enough to practise on their prisoners.

Thompson had his reward in the sentence of the court-martial which took place on the 17th of December, 1798, at Sheerness; and what the captains said was all true—that the gallant and almost unprecedented defence of the captain of his Majesty's late ship the *Leander*, against so superior a force as that of the *Genèreux*, is deserving of every praise his country and this court can give; and that his conduct, with that of the officers and men under his command, reflects not only the highest honour on himself and them, but to their country at large,' etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PIRATE SHIP.

The black flag was hoisted; the schooner bore away.

And the merchantman yielded to fate.

Sea Song.

Now, let us change the subject for a while. I'll relate a yarn of my messmate, Tom Tomlin, about a ghost: we sailors are rather partial to these gentlemen.

'It's many a day,' says Tom, 'since I saw it—but I have seen it often, in my memory since. We had been sent down in the *Glengyle* to Rio, about some pirating business which had been carried on there by some of the Spaniards; and we soon found that after straight, and recovered one or two men, the only survivors out of a company of sixty belonging to different ships, the crews of which had walked the plank or been hanged overboard. It is no use saying to whom; nothing saves a man but being on a cooper or a butcher's cart, rap and saved. I guess he played the middle.

This would Jack, a fellow who could twist a yarn, give a horn pipe, or sing a rattle. I believe he had been employed in every office under the sun, he had belonged to a regiment of foot, been a soldier, was shipped as painter, tinner, barber, seaman,

his hat off, or lift up his leg as he made a bow—

"There—none of your civility. Come here. Where is your ship from?"

"Liverpool."

"Are you the captain of her?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your cargo?"

"Here are the papers, sir."

"Who asked you for papers, you mongrel! Bring a pair of scissors and cut the fellow's tongue out, for it is no use to him if he can't answer as he ought. Do you hear there?"

'Before you could say Jack Robinson, his tongue was out, and he left bleeding on the deck.'

"Hand here a hot iron," said the pirate; there was one in a moment. "Stop the bleeding for a time, for he must not die yet;" and one of the crew opened the poor fellow's mouth, and then rubbed the hot iron against the sore.

"Here, you old-looking scare-crow!" said the pirate to old Jack; "look there!" pointing to the mutilated captain, "and mind *your* tongue. Who are you?"

"I'm barber, carpenter, cooper, fiddler, and seaman."

"Anything else?"

"Nothing else."

"What's her cargo?"

"Don't know, for I never saw."

"Your eyes don't seem of much use to you; so——"

Old Jack interrupted, "Except to shave and to *saw*."

"Ah.—How many men are there on board?"

"Twelve men and two women."

"Whew!" went the pirate. "Who are the women?"

"His wife—but she's killed by the last shot, and his daughter."

"Daughter! Here, go on board," said he to one of his crew, "and bring the rest on board, women and all. And do you *hear*? throw those three chaps overboard—but keep this fiddler."

Jack had not time to look about him, before his shipmates were struggling in the grasp of the pirates, and their distinct splashes in the water told that the captain's orders had been obeyed.

"Let her lurge ahead a little," said the captain; for, do you see, even his black soul was willing to be removed from the murderous spot. They put the helm amidships, and she shot ahead in a moment. Jack could not look over the side—he was afraid to move a foot.

The boat soon returned. The pirate's orders had been observed to the very letter: two female forms were in the stern-beets, and both apparently dead—both covered with blood; whilst the rest of the crew sat

between the thwarts of the boat, looking as if the pirate need not give orders for their execution. They came alongside: the low deck of the schooner was hardly higher than the boat's gunwale; a kind of door was opened, and the crew of the *John and Sarah* were told to get on board. What they thought when they saw the captain stretched on the deck writhing in horrible pain, with his tongue by his side, Jack could not tell; but they walked by the mainmast of the schooner, where old Jack was standing, as one sheep follows the other, and as if hope could be increased by their herding together, or as if they could resist the better should the butchers fall among them.

"Hand up the women!" said the captain.

In vain poor Sarah had wound her arms round the body of the mother; the strong arms of the pirates soon separated the living from the dead; and the daughter's scream, when she was torn from her parent, reached the ear of her father. He started upon his feet; his swollen face, his burnt lips, quivering with pain, and seemingly endeavouring to give utterance to his wishes. The dead body of the mother was thrown at his feet—at the feet of the husband was the corpse of the wife thrown; and then, whatever might have been her faults living, it was evident her husband forgave them all. He looked from the dead to the living; for Sarah rushed into his arms, saying, "My father! my father!—oh, save me! save me!" Her hair had got adrift from the combs which had bound it together, and the long locks hung in disorder over her shoulders; she had hidden her face in his neck. At last, after clinging to him, as if to fix her hands so that no mortal could separate them, she looked in his face, and seeing the terrible mutilation, gave one loud shriek, and fell over her mother.

The scene, terrible to any to behold, had operated on the crew of that fatal ship, who knew the sweet disposition of the daughter and the better qualities of the father; and although their own situation was sufficiently awful, they forgot themselves to weep for her.

The captain of the pirate stood close to the companion unmoved, his eyes rather glistening over the beautiful features of his captive. Death was a sight so common to him, that he cared not how often he saw it. But the woman—and such a woman!—she awoke every bad passion. The captain of the prize still remained standing, although it was evidently an exertion which could not last many moments: his eyes were upon his wife and daughter, one dead, the other worse than dead; for even the father could not hope that she might escape the degradation which she was certain to experience.

"Here," said the pirate, "take that girl

to my cabin; and, do you know, the winds
performs nothing to her, but to make her
leap up.

At the same time, said the man in good English, "to mother's house in Swedish; and then to come to the school of the girl. And the two children, the father kept them so well until, on the last day, they both fell back; it was the last of their argument to protect his only child."

[illegible]

There is a third principle, which the private law and the company law was built on, but I never read and then not following.

$\{f_1, \dots, f_n\}$ is a basis for V .

There is a lot of talk about the "right" to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But what about the right to work with the police?

"When the lantern came on deck, he looked through the bars of his cell and he saw a crowd of prisoners, and the blackest of men, and the prisoners looked at him eyes to look upon the murderer. He thought that the company of the others came out when they came on deck, and any man could find a man to war in the know the punishment of one of the men, and with out the punishment, he looks at the company, and then at the sailors, and the other men at him, he looks at the lower deck, and he stands at the back to his shoes."

“Pot to leave ahead and to tell a . . .
the . . .

"We'll enter the cabin first," he told the line boys, the proper, efficient way to close up to them. He looked at them first, slow, slow, in a friendly, calm, steady way.

"The only remark the captain made was this; "I wonder if the pilot-fish are on the look-out; for their masters will have a feast to-night." Those fish always find the food for those sea-devils, sharks; and whenever you see the little coupee blue and white fish, you may be certain the large one is near at hand.

"There were six more to finish, including old Jack; and great was the pluck shown by all of them.

"Will you swim, or commit a murder?" said the captain to William Hindmarsh.

"Hindmarsh had a wife and family, and was a quiet well-disposed man; but he was none of the bravest—at least, so his shipmates fancied; and there's no doubt that the thoughts of his wife and his dear little daughter must have made him think that joining the pirates, which he took the last question to mean, might give him an opportunity of returning, perhaps without the sin fastened to his soul; so he answered, "Commit the murder."

"Then throw that girl overboard!" said the captain.

"Hindmarsh's face grew in an instant into a resolution none could mistake. He said, "May the Lord have mercy upon me! for I will rather die ten thousand times."

"Indeed!" said the captain; "then we will take you at your word. Bring the scissors and the hot iron."

"I'll do it, sir; but spare me."

"Then do it," and he was cut loose. He walked aft to Sarah; everyone of his shipmates called out to him not to touch a hair of her head; but when he got near her, he made one spring, cleared the way to the taffail, and giving a leap, was overboard and drowned.

"It was at this moment that a vessel was seen on the larboard bow; for it was not quite dark, and just the last glimmer of daylight. The man aloft had seen the stranger; it made life shorter to the rest, for they were bundled overboard, every mother's son of them but old Jack and Sarah. The latter was taken below and put to bed, the boy being left to watch her; whilst all sail was cracked on the larboard in chase, the decks cleared of the passengers, everything got ready for a fight. When this was done, old Jack was called.

"What do you say, ye rascal, do?"

"I'm a cooper, a cooper, a barber, a fiddler, and a scholar."

"Jack-of-all-trades, and master of none, I suppose," said the captain. "Here, boy, hand up my violin. And do you hear, you old scoundrel, take care how you play, for I shall judge by that of your skill and cunning; and do you mind—" and he pointed to the gangway.

"This was the last of them all; when a man's life depends upon his playing well upon such an instrument."

violin—it is not like the guitar, for that has the notes marked, but this depends entirely upon the nerves and the ear of the performer. Well, Jack said that he could play very decently, and that he had no fears before about his *execution*; but now, you see, it is like enough he thought about both, in the way of being bow-strung or a-bridged, like Hindmarsh. It is for all the world like telling a sailor to make his defence before a court of captains; it is a hundred to one if the sight of the skipper does not take the talk out of him if he had any to lose. And what's a fore-mast man's lingo to the first lieutenant's, or perhaps his own commander's—a man that Jack has been taught to obey, and to stand with his hat off when he speaks to him on the quarter-deck. That ought all to be altered, Ben; it's not giving the sailor a fair chance, I know that, for I was present when Johnson was tried.

"Well, old Jack took the fiddle, and he strikes up "Moll in the Wad" with so much spirit that these devils in trousers began to dance; then he changed it to the hornpipe, and away the fellows went along the deck, with a double shuffle and cut, just as light of heart as if the eleven men they had just murdered had never been amongst them. Even the Spaniards took the cigars from their mouths to laugh; and that proves how he carried away the heads and heels of all present; for a Spaniard never leaves off smoking, not even in bed, I believe; and as for laughing, why, they are like Turks—they think laughing a kind of exercise which requires work, and they never work even by thinking.

"You'll do," said the captain. "When you have done with him, my lads, give him some supper and let him go to bed; we want a cooper and a barber, and he'll do well enough; besides, we can make him visit the sharks when—"

"They lost sight of the chase about an hour after, and it came on to blow fresh; the winds were managed, old Jack said, in proper sea-mill-like style, and the captain stood aloft, made in all its branches. About midnight they kept a bright lookout, but they could not hit upon the stranger; not when morning came, she was out of sight. They then changed the course, and stood towards Rio Janeiro.

"Old Jack was determined to make the best of his situation, and lay by for a good opportunity of slipping his cable; and he soon was introduced into the cabin to have the captain. There he saw Sarah, always in tears, and always endeavouring to make him understand something; but the pirate generally made the girl sit before him, so that Jack could not move him and see her without pain. About a week after the capture, and when they were approaching

his shirt-collar open ; whilst Sarah was dressed all ready to go on shore, in the very newest bonnet saved from the plunder. She gave Jack a look which, poor fellow ! he understood well enough. He placed his box upon the table, dipped in the brush, and lathered the bull-throat of the pirate. He took the razor and began his work : his hand trembled and he cut the lip ; the blood began to flow—the sight of it restored him to more confidence. “Up and down, sir !” he heard distinctly from the *Glasgow* ; then “Thick and dry for weighing !” He drew the razor across the captain’s throat, and nearly severed his head from his body. In an instant Jack was overboard, and one of the pirates after him. He swam well—his pursuer also. Jack hailed : the boatswain saw and heard ; the boats were hooked on for hoisting, one shoved off instantly, and the pirate had just placed his hand upon the back of his victim, when the boat saved them both. The story was told in a minute, and expedition used in both vessels. The pirate had cut her cables and was making sail ; the *Glasgow* weighed and fired right into her : all exertion was useless ; she was captured, anchored, and Sarah saved. The dead captain was buried on the shore, close to a large tree ; and I was one who dug the grave and placed him in it.

“As the vessel was under Spanish colours, it was requisite to inform the authorities, and to claim the vessel legally ; and this, with the “*poco, a poco*” gentlemen, requires time. Jack never held up his head but he thought always of the act, which every one justified : but it was at his heart that he felt uneasy. “Tom,” said he to me one day, “I think my mind would be easier if I went on shore to the grave and stuck up a cross.” “We’ll get liberty,” said I. So we did—our captain was a Christian—and there was not a man in the craft who did not honour old Jack for the thought. We were landed at the town, and had leave to remain until nine at night, when the boat was to be on shore for the liberty men. We got to the grave about sunset, and went down by the tree. It was a beautiful evening, and the water washed the shore without a ripple : everything was still as death ; and, with the exception of the chirping of the birds, the noise of the crickets, and the buzz of mosquitoes, it was like hi-*gr*.

Jack sat by the tree, his face covered with his hands, saying his prayers. I did not disturb him, although now the twilight was fast going, the clouds rising, and night almost at hand. About eight it was dark—dark as pitch. The lightning and the thunder began, and Jack awoke as it were from a dream, holding the cross in his hand. He turned to me ; but I was not man there. He said, “Come and place it on, I am, at his head—I killed him in cold blood—come.”

I could not stir : I trembled like a leaf, and I remained seated.

“Why, what ails you ?” said he ; “he’s dead—dead, and cold, and buried—there !” A flash of lightning came at the moment, and I saw something move on the grave ; ay, I saw the eyes look fiercely at him, for he was the nearest ; and he saw it too, and trembled. At last he got near the grave, and he placed the cross on the head. Another flash came ; I saw the body without the head carried away ; a growl succeeded, the cross was thrown down, and old Jack fell down on the grave, and I ran back to the town, and never spoke until we had got on board.

CHAPTER XV.

AT NAPLES.

“’Tis unmanly to chatter behind people’s back.
But ’tis pretty well known that the lady’s a crack ;
Besides, if those things about beauty be true,
That there is but one Venus, why, I say there’s two.”

DIEDIN.

BUT to return to my story. After the battle of the Nile I grew an inch taller. At every place we were looked upon as conquerors. Mr. Davison, the agent, had medals struck in gold, silver, gilt metal, and copper. I had a silver one—the admiral got it for me, and I keep it at home, screwed up in the canvas, as bright and as new as the day it came out to us.

It was on the 22nd September that the *Vanguard*, none the worse for her shot-holes—for they, like the medals and crosses, are the badges of bravery—came in sight of Naples. It was here we saw the first fruits of our victory. The bay was crowded with boats, full of thousands of lovely creatures, all waving their handkerchiefs, all kissing their hands. Music was playing in all directions : and as for flags, there were enough to have supplied the fleet with bunting for three years. And these gaieties in the front, and the loveliness of that bay in the rear, was a sight worth seeing.

The *Alexander* had arrived before us, and the whole of liberated Italy, at least the coast about Naples, seemed to have got into boats to welcome Nelson. As we neared the anchorage, Sir William and Lady Hamilton led the squadron of boats, and they came alongside. I had seen *her* once before, but I never saw any woman look more lovely ; they made a Venus of *her* afterwards.

No sooner did she get on deck, than she embraced the admiral, and fainted. There was the devil to pay, for the king was com-

boat; and when, after much calling and starting, we got all of them in the boat, it was quite awful to see how the poor fellows clapped their oars in the water, and tried, when they took them out, to stop the effect they had produced. When they got near to him, even the midshipman did not like it, and the boat kept pulling round and round him, like a cooper round a cask. No one liked to touch it, for they had all seen it hung; and as it rose with the swell of the sea, it seemed to surge towards the land, from which it had been treacherously taken. He was buried on shore; and some say he walks about Naples every night, and that on the anniversary of his execution he wears a rope round his neck—a kind of collar for an order of knighthood.

We landed our royal cargo on the 26th, having experienced a most riotous gale of wind, during which one of the princesses was taken ill and died in Lady Hamilton's arms.

Now, I'm not going to talk like a philosopher; but this I must say, that although the great people have been pleased to abuse Lady Hamilton right and left, yet, I say, she had more heart, more courage, than a whole regiment of Neapolitan soldiers. She was a wonderful woman; she did not know what fear was. Some say her heart was naturally revengeful: I say that, more or less, we are all so. The most powerful are generally the most lenient. The great man does not act himself; but he has hundreds of screws to weigh the greatest weight. We revenge the insult only in one way; the great and the powerful in a thousand unseen acts. Is it any wonder, then, that a woman should be revengeful? It's all moonshine finding fault with anyone for an act which belongs to our natures. If you are struck, don't you cry to be revenged? If insulted, don't we ask for revenge?—and words but harder than blows. If disappointed, we wish for revenge; in short, in every moment of our life the bad passion is uppermost; and who can condemn us, if occasionally it breaks adrift from the cable-tie of its confinement, and takes its own retaliation?

It was in Sicily that they made Nelson a duke. His title was Duke of Thunderston. Bronte means thunder—and we used to call him Thunder and Lightning between decks. And there he was a duke; whilst I, who had served in every action with him, from the time he fought the bear until he hung the prince, was a coxswain! I might have been a warrant; but what's a gunner to a duke? And if I had been a duke, I should never have known the delight of writing my life; so I am, as I always was, contented with my station.

I won't talk about Malta; but I'll just say what it was that made Nelson omit the

Mediterranean in 1800. It was because Lord Keith was appointed to the command, and Sir Sydney Smith had a squadron in those seas not under the control of Nelson. I came all the way home with him by land; and we had Sir William and Lady Hamilton with us. We had an Italian, who taught me a little of his lingo; and I in return made an English scholar of him. He had been on board the *Foudroyant* with us, and I made a man of him. He was a capital cook, and used to dress those tobacco pipes made easy, macaroni, so well without breaking them, that I have known him put a hundred and twenty fathom, the length of a cable, down his throat, and stow it away in the tiers of his stomach, without one bend riding over the other! Now, some who don't swallow quite so well, may perhaps disbelieve it; but, after all, I only said it went down through the *mouth* of the tier without a *bight*—and that's not so bad either.

We went through Germany; and of all the sights I ever saw, I never clapped eyes upon anything the like of this. At Prince Esterhazy's, there used to be a hundred grenadiers, all six feet high, who waited at table; there was not a man of them that couldn't have clapped me in their pockets, and my head would never have come clear of the hole.

They wanted to shove one of your long-togged gingerbread coats on me; but I didn't want any cloth *tails*;—hadn't I one of my own to cover my stern? 'No,' said I; 'we sailors are all fair and above-board—no disguise about us: here you see our shape and build, and no mistake; but if you were unrigged, and had nothing over your mast-heads, and no paint on your hulls, I'm thinking I could thrash any four of you.' I must say this for them—they stuffed me as if I had been a turkey for Christmas.

They made as much of the admiral as if he had been their king. After this we got on towards Hamburg; and it is not for me, who ever received kindness, to say one word about his lordship; but that woman! Ah! that was it. I never shall see anything like her again; and yet sometimes, when one walks over Westminster-bridge, or goes to the fair, we see faces that the whole world could not rival. Then to look at their feet, when a breeze takes their canvas a little aback, or keeps it shivering like a topsail lowered for reefing! And this I know—for I have been east and west, north and south—that in no part of the world are women to be seen like those of our dear little island. Lord bless them! I love them all.

whistling merrily from the north-west, blowing a double-reefed top-sailed breeze, that we weighed, in order to pass the Sound. Nelson led the van: his flag was on board Foley's ship, the *Elephant*; Sir Hyde Parker the centre, and Admiral Graves the rear. The passage of the Sound is about three miles wide; and the castle of Elsinour, and close to it that of Cronenburgh, on the Danish coast, command more than half-way across; whilst the guns from Helsinburg could reach over the spot where the shots from Elsinour would fall; so that, go which way you would, either one side or the other, or mid-channel, the shot were sure to whistle over our heads: and they must have been bad marksmen to miss us all, for we had fifty-one sail with us, and out of this number sixteen were ships of the line.

We were going into action now with stone walls, where we had no mast to fire away and give three cheers as it fell. The *Monarch* went first; and no sooner had she reached mid-channel, than a hundred guns, and mortars by scores, opened upon her. The shot fell like hail; but they did no damage, and were more like a Turkish salute than an angry fire. It was only fit to be laughed at; for no sooner did the admiral perceive that the Swedish shore never fired, than our fleet hauled over that side, keeping out of range of the Danish guns; and although they blazed away during the whole time of the passage, not a man was touched. In the evening we were all at anchor between the Island of Huen and Copenhagen.

No sooner had the fleet anchored, than a council of war was held on board Sir Hyde Parker's ship: and a lugger which belonged to our fleet was seen standing in-shore reconnoitring the enemy's position. And it was no joke to see such a line of galleys, fire-ships, gun-boats, line-of-battle ships, radeaus, pontoons, with large batteries, and such like, extending nearly four miles; but I heard Nelson say, 'he wished it had been eight.' We had got so used to fighting, that we thought nothing of half-a-dozen batteries. We had to buoy the channel to get at them, for the Danes knew how to throw every obstacle in our way—and we knew how to remove them.

I remember, when I told this yarn to Jack Halyard, who was in Howe's action, and who was one of your regular barge's crew—such a chap! with the handsomest face and the largest quid in the fleet!—says I to him, as we sat at our mess-table, whilst we were emptying the kid of grog, 'I must have some biscuits, or I shall never make you understand this action without I place the batteries and the ships.' This big one stands for Copenhagen—and this one represents the middle ground: it's about two leagues from the city. And this,' said I, as

I dipped my finger into the kid, 'this represents the channel between the middle ground and the town: it's called the King's Channel, and is deeper than this allowance of ours. I wish we could fill it up; you see, I have to put my fingers such a way down before I get enough to mark a channel.—Well, along this channel the Danes had got their line of defence, as close to the shore as possible.

'They had nineteen ships; there—there they are, nineteen of them: those are the floating batteries, and these round ones are the crown-batteries.—They are artificial islands at the mouth of the harbour; and this one, the largest, had sixty-six guns. There—there it is, all right!

'Well, on the 1st of April our fleet anchored here, off the north-west end of the middle ground; and I—for I was Nelson's servant then—assisted at the signals, lent a hand to hoist the old flags, "prepare for battle;" whilst Nelson went on board the *Amazon*, commanded by that brave fellow Riou, to take a last look of the ships and their position. He returned at 1 A.M. and we all weighed.

'Along here,' I continued, making another line of grog, 'was a narrow channel between the Island of Saltholm and the middle ground: this is the island.'

'Avaust there, Ben!' said Jack: 'you have taken away one of the artificial islands.'

'Well, now it is all right. This channel we had buoyed. Riou led the way in the *Amazon*, and the small fry kept sounding on both sides of us. We coasted along the outer ridge of the shoal—along here, you see—and we anchored off Draco Point just at dark, the headmost of the Danish ships being about two miles from us.

'Such work as we had on board that night! Lord Nelson was as tired as a smuggler after he has run his cargo, and I was sent for to ask him to lie down in his cot, which I placed on the deck,* whilst he told the clerks what orders to write; and he kept me running up and down the hatchway like a messenger-boy, every five minutes, to see which way the wind was. He was in high spirits, and kept them all alive. He had only Riou and Foley with him; the rest of the captains had gone on board their own ships, but most of them had dined on board the *Elephant*. Nelson never thought of going to sleep; he kept hurrying the clerks, and asking "how the wind was." I know I wished it had been very ill and died into a calm.

'At daybreak it was fair. Nelson was up; signal was flying for all captains, and every preparation made. Then came the

Southey mentions that all persuasion was unavailing, until Allen, his old servant, used that kind of authority which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume:—Ben Brace is Allen. —ED.

signal for close action—flying. The flags blew out all clear, and any man inclined to see it had only to look.

'Well then, Jack, I takes my purser's pump, for the glass was not much better; and there I saw at Sir Hyde's masthead, as plain as a pike-staff, No. 39. The signal-lieutenant called for the book, and I tumbled over the pages—"for," thinks I to myself, "I have been at this trade for the last five-and-twenty years, and bless me if ever I heard of No. 39 before! Thirty-nine!" I kept saying to myself—"it must be something about sending a boat to communicate. Thirty-nine!" said I; "I'm blessed if this is not something to do with the old *Agememnon*!"—for she repeated the signal. What do you think it was, Jack?'"

'Can't say, Ben,' he replied, as he puffed out a long line of smoke, which previous to this interruption he had been letting off like small guns from both broadsides of his mouth—"Can't say. Whew!"

'And curse me if I can see!' said Ben; 'why, you make more smoke than a frigate on fire.'

'Avast there, Ben, if you please!—don't talk of it—it makes my eyes water.'

'And so it does mine. But guess, Jack!'

'Guess, Ben?—why, then, I suppose it was to splice the main-brace, or to pipe to dinner.'

'No.'

'Well, then, tell us.'

'You'd never guess it, not any mother's son of you: such a signal to be made to Nelson!—It was "to discontinue the action!"'

'My eyes and limbs!' said Jack.

'Oh, humbug!' said the marine.

'So I thought. So says I to the lieutenant, "It's some mistake, sir, or we have not seen the flags."'

'"Thirty-nine," says the signal-man again, "or there's no frogs in France!"'

'"What is it?" said the lieutenant.'

'"Discontinue the action," said I, holding out the book; for I knew he wouldn't believe me.'

'"None of your nonsense, sir," said he: "this is no time for joking. But, by heavens! it's all right—thirty-nine, as plain as the nose on the admiral's face. Let's look again!" and away he trudged, book and all, to the admiral, whilst I followed, with a face as long as a boarding-pike.'

'"What!" said Nelson, and he wagged the stump of his right arm as if it had got St. Vincent's dance, "is the signal for close action up?"'

'"Certainly, my lord," says I.

'"Ah, that's right," said he, and I understood his look: "keep it there: do you hear?"'

'"Ay, ay, sir!" said I.

'"Here, give me the glass for a moment."

'Well, he takes the glass, levels it at Sir

Hyde's ship, claps his blind eye to it, and, with the gravest face in the world, turned round to Captain Foley, and said, "I really do not see the signal. Do you hear?" said he, "nail mine for closer action to the mast!" and away he walked. We afterwards heard that Sir Hyde Parker only made the signal in order that Nelson might retire, if, owing to the number of ships aground, he might find himself too weak.

'I never knew chaps fire faster or better than those Danes. The action was gloriously maintained on both sides: but Riou, who saw the signal, and whose squadron was cut almost to pieces, obeyed it. He was killed, as he hauled off. It is just as well he was killed, for he would have died of a broken heart had he come out safe. Never was there a finer fellow—no, not in the whole navy—Nelson excepted.

'Well, it was give and take for many a long hour; and the *Monarch* got the most of the shot: she lost two hundred and ten men; and the *Bellona*, from the bursting of her own guns, suffered very much. But on board of the old *Monarch*, those jolly fellows who were left picked up the pork which a good-natured shot let adrift from the coppers, and they fought and ate like so many mastiff-dogs. Only think, two hundred and ten men killed!—why, it's more than any one ship in the navy lost during the whole of the war.

'The Danes, as fast as men were killed or officers wounded, sent others from the shore; and never was gallantry more displayed by any nation under the sun. There was one young man, Mr. Villemois, got on a raft, with twenty-four guns, and a hundred and twenty men; and somehow—for he had no mast—he contrived to get under the *Elephant's* stern, and he opened his fire. We could not get a gun to bear upon him, and he was amusing himself at our expense. I tried a tern-chaser; but it went over and over him. This was no very pleasant business for us who were stationed on the poop; for Mr. Villemois pointed his guns rather high, and one could not look over the stern to see what colour the water was, but smack came the shot popping at us, as if we were birds in September. Think! "My brave boys, I will give you something rather heavier than dough-boys to eat;" so I went to Captain Foley, and told him the liberties the young gentleman was taking with his cabin windows. He sent the marines on the poop, who, as they fired down upon the open platform of the raft, soon made considerable havoc amongst the Danes, and spoiled their sport a little. Nelson came and looked at her; and after the action, he took Villemois by the hand on the quarter-deck, and called him a brave defender of his country, and a gallant and excellent officer.

groans of the wounded succeed the bustle of an action,—then it is, Jack, that we know we have hearts, for they worry us sadly.

'We lost in that battle no less than nine hundred and fifty-three men. The Danes, counting in their prisoners, mustered six thousand short of complement. Our prizes amounted to six line-of-battle ships and six preams. We only sent one, the *Holstein*, a sixty-four, to England; the rest were burnt and sunk with all their guns on board: and we did not think that was the best way of disposing of them, for it gave us no prize-money;—and, Jack, you know as well as myself, that prize-money is just as acceptable to us foremastmen, as pensions and pay to others;—and we did grumble, and so did Lord Nelson, at sinking ships which might have been in Portsmouth-harbour in a week's time.

'Another thing grieved my heart. You know that we have no burying-ground on board a ship; and that most of us prefer a hammock, with a round-shot or two at the feet, to all the humbug of shore-going gentlemen, who hire others to cry for them, and who get a black box mounted on four wheels, with feathers and gimcracks, to carry them to the grave. With us it is a grating and a flag—one splash in the water, and the Lord have mercy on our souls! But when the Danes buried their dead, they made a grand affair of it; and of course it was a consolation to those who were left, to see that, had they died, they would have been buried decently.

'I happened to be on shore with the admiral when the Danes buried their dead. It was the third day after the action: the whole city seemed to have assembled in the naval church-yard. Young women dressed in white threw flowers over the graves; thousands shed tears; and I thought that a nation consulted its own dignity when it thus paid the last tribute to departed bravery. It makes a man feel that he does not die like a dog; it makes a soldier or a sailor conscious that others look on to write his name down in the log-book of memory; and when he has run through this life in the service of his country, with a grateful remembrance for all the blessings he may have received, it is then, when the last *adieu* is placed over his mast-head, when he is hove down keel out, that those who meet him for ever in the narrow limbo of the grave, where there is no room required for swinging clear, say, "There lies a man who faithfully served his king and his country;" and they lift their hand; when the clergyman says, "A be to a be, dust to dust;" and pray that he who behaved so well here may find an eternal repose there. — And now, my lads, I'll just wind up the yarn with a song; and when I've done, the grog

will be done,—and when that's done, a sailor is done.

'Say, who would a landsman remain,

To go dozing about in a field,

With just learning enough to explain,

What potato-plots annually yield;

Who are smoke-dried in cities or towns,

Or are kill'd by the carriages there;

Who have no one to talk to but clowns,

And no one to love—but the fair?

'Oh, give me the brave seaman's life,

Who sails every ocean around,

Who is true to his king and his wife,

And who fights when a foe can be found;

Who with Nelson or Jervis has sail'd,

At St. Vincent, the Nile, and the Brush—

Whose heart and whose hand never fail'd,

When his courage was put to the push.

'Then we've Susan to welcome us home

After toiling through many a breeze,

And our dear little children to come

And climb up the veteran's knees.

Lord love you! the landsman can't kwon

The joy when, return'd from strange parts,

We tell how we conquer'd our foes—

Of affections which cherish'd our hearts.

'Oh never mind gales which arise,

If to east or to west we may steer;

Like the scud which may darken the skies,

So are woes which occasion a tear.

To each clime, to each country we roam,

Every shade of creation we see;—

Then the grog, how we relish at home!—

Oh, the life of a sailor: for me!

CHAPTER XVII.

TACKLE CAUGHT.

'The arm that once, in firm alliance,

England's proud standard nobly bore,

Dishonour'd now, claims no alliance,

But, faithless, waves in vile defiance,

And dares to threat its native shore.'

Sea Song.

I HAVE often turned in my mind the meaning of the words 'luck in life;' and I am yet in doubt if fortune cannot be commanded; or if we are to wait for its coming, like a midshipman in the jolly-boat when the purser's steward is gone for fresh provisions, I fancy I might wait long enough before I should see Mrs. Fortune, or Mrs. Anybody else, coming to me and killing me with kindness. No, no; Fortune's steps are like a Jacob's ladder over the stern of a three-decker: your timid man may have his foot upon it, and fail; your bold man, when once he clasps it, easily mounts. But yet there's many a man in the navy who is bold, daring, active, clever, and a seaman, and yet dies a half-pay lieutenant or a boatswain's mate; whilst some, who know very little about their profession, have had fathers parliament-men, and live to see their bunting at the maintop-gallant-mast head. But I suppose

impossible to bring out any of the vessels, for the fire became so hot directly the flag was down, that the difficulty of unhooking the boat was not to be overcome; and the boats ultimately returned, having lost one hundred and seventy-two men, without one vessel to show us a victory.

It happened that when one of the boats of Parker's division succeeded in getting on board one of these porcupines, the French made a more than usually obstinate resistance. They defended her manfully, and were cheered and encouraged by a stout-looking fellow, who fought like a tigress in defending her cubs. At last, after many a wound given and received, the whole surrendered but the man who had gallantly stood foremost. He jumped overboard with his cutlass in his mouth, and endeavoured to gain the next vessel: but one of the boats belonging to the division was at that moment pulling between the enemy's line, and seeing the man, they hauled him on board. Although he fought like a devil first, to shake himself from the hook which the bowman had fixed in his jacket, in he was hauled at last: and he delivered himself of a cargo of curses in that hoarse, snuffing, whistling language, which, instead of coming from the mouth of a man like our good, respectable, round oath, came as if he was forcing it out of his forehead, or driving it through his nose.

It happened that one of the men was wounded in the boat, and was placed underneath the thwarts, when this chap trod upon him, or somehow kicked his wounded leg. Jack distributed a volley of words for the Frenchman's selection; but either one of them would have been but poorly received in good company, and this seemed to hurt the prisoner more than his captivity, for he growled out in good English, 'The devil take you!' Two of the men heard it; and the officer of the boat immediately ordered him to be lashed, hand, and feet, for there was not a doubt, from his good pronunciation, but that he was English. But although, when they were returning to the ship, he was frequently spoken to, yet he never let the gut of tongues again. He said he could not understand a word, and it was 'No, *je n'entends rien*.' I told old Ratting, when he related me this, that, without being person to him, he didn't understand the lingo; for he must have said, '*Je n'entends rien*,' which, as I was once very intimate with a Frenchman, I knew to be correct. 'Thank you, Ben, for your learning,' said he; 'maybe you're right; for, do you mind, I did not hear him say so.'

I was on board the *Medusa*, looking on at the fun, but when it was reported that an Englishman was taken prisoner, having been the most forward in the service of our

enemies, Lord Nelson then ordered that he might be brought on board to pass round the fleet, to see if any one could know him. And if one thing was hated by our gallant admiral more than another, it was when an Englishman forgot himself so much as to desert to an enemy, and that enemy a Frenchman. He used to tell his midshipmen, 'You must hate a Frenchman as you do the devil.'

Well, the prisoner was brought on board the *Medusa*. The men were mustered at divisions, and he was passed before every man in the ship. No one knew him. At last, after going from ship to ship, a man on board the *Gannet*, who was slightly wounded, happened to come on deck, and he roared out directly, 'Why, that's Tackle! he was a shipmate of mine on board the *Glasgow*!' And when he was taken on board the *Isis*, he was claimed as a deserter from her.

This circumstance made a great noise in the squadron, and an order was given for a court-martial to assemble on the 19th August, on board the *Medusa*, Captain Gore.

The night previous to the trial, the prisoner was removed to us, and placed under the half-deck, with a sentinel to watch him, although he was in irons—for irons, although pretty safe, are not quite sure.

Lord Nelson was at this time very fidgety about Captain Parker, who had been wounded in the leg, and was considered in great danger. I was sent about a hundred times with notes—for I was then in the capacity of admiral's servant, messenger-boy, and coxswain; and if ever one brave man felt for another, it was when that Parker died: Lord Nelson did not get over that in a hurry.

I remember the 18th August well, the day which preceded the trial, for on that day we buried Mr. Gore and Mr. Bristow in one grave at Ded. At that funeral Lord Nelson himself, with eight captains attended; and when the matins were over them, that man

he was more than a man—he burst into tears, and felt for the youngsters as if they had been his sons.

It was the evening before the trial, and after the burial, that I came on board for something the admiral wanted, when I heard some of the men talking about the prisoner; and being curious—at least I was, when I had a pair of eyes—I crept over the starboard side of the half-deck, and there I saw Tackle.

'Ah! he! and he! what! you come against me?' 'Not on one account,' said I, 'but as the murderer of my sister!' I was in a hurry; but the sentry interposed, and said he had orders that no one should speak to the prisoner. I ran to the cabin, got what I was sent for, and when landed, ran to the room in which Lord Nelson was seated

on my ear, 'I would rather you did not; and if you made yourself scarce upon this occasion, I should like you the better, if possible. This is no part of my punishment, and I might have been spared this nonsense.'

'Nonsense!' said I. 'Tackle, three days from this you will be swinging from the fore-yard-arm: I have spoken to Lord Nelson to save you, but he cannot—he dare not!'

'What, Brace!' said Tackle, 'I see you have profited by my instructions on board the *Nancy*, that there was no revenge like killing a man with kindness. Now, if I could only shake myself out of these cursed bilboes, I would very soon see which was the better man of the two: your room is better than your company;—and there,' said he, as he spat upon me—'there is for your kindness! I would rather dance upon nothing, than live indebted to you for my life.'

I was rather hurt at this; but I kept up my temper, and continued, 'Tackle! why do you continue in this useless manner? Would you go to hell without one man to pray for you? Is this the way to treat one who came to comfort you—to spit upon him? Tackle, no one overhears us: I tell you, three days from this, and the morning breeze will blow upon your corpse.—Your daughter is yet alive!' He darted upright as if he had been struck through the heart by a musket-ball, and looked me full in the face.

'She's dead, Brace, and you know it!'

'She's alive,' said I, 'and will be here to-morrow night! No one can mistake her—the mark is on her forehead. Think, Tackle, what she will feel, when the first time she knows her father it will be when he is sentenced to die!'

'Jane!' he said.

'Is dead—you shot her! Her father died that night.'

'I know it all,' he said, 'for Jacob told me the truth. Now, if I could ask a man I hate so much as yourself a favour, it would be to bring me my daughter before I die.'

'It would be better,' said I, 'that she never knew her father; and then the guilt of her parent and the shame of her birth would be spared her for ever.'

'You devil out of hell!' said the enraged Tackle; 'is it thus you would raise a hope, to crush it instantly? Is it thus, when the cup of bitterness is full, you add the only drop to make it overflow?—But stop, Brace—don't go; tell me, shall I see Jane? Why, I could almost kneel to you if you would say yes.'

'To-morrow you shall see her.'

'And to-morrow I shall be tried, condemned—the rope will be about my neck when I am made a father! I won't see her.'

But, Brace, I'm yet well to do in the world—all I have got is yours if you will help me to escape. You would not see your

own brother-in-law hung? Have you no feeling of pride left for little Jane? Would you have her scoffed at, as the child of a man executed at the fore-yard-arm? Think of this, and listen to me;—my escape will save all this; my daughter would not be a blot to point at!'

'It's very bad,' I replied—'very; but if I had the will, I have not the power'; and I pointed to the irons; he shook them with rage.

'If you had the will!—Then, d—n you, it is my death you want. Go! I hate you, despise you, abhor you!—yes, now, as much as ever!'

'You will die, then, without forgiving me, and without seeing your daughter? Good night!—And yet for her,' said I, 'for her sake I would—'

'Stop, stop!' said Tackle; 'don't leave me. Can you do nothing for me? Think of Jane!'

'Nothing! nothing! I fear, nothing! But this I can promise, that I will see you to-morrow; and to-morrow evening you shall see your daughter. I must not wait.'

I held out my hand; he held it firmly in his grasp—it was like the nip of a vice; his little red eyes were fixed upon me as he said,

'I will die like a man, and like a Christian.'

'I hope so, Tackle,' I added.

'I will, Brace. God bless you!—mind you bring me my daughter, and perhaps I may yet live. You shake your head. Is there no hope?—what, none?—must I hang? And as he said this, he fixed his eyes upon me with such a look, that even I trembled.

'Good night, Tackle!' I said, as I looked what I believed: 'say your prayers; and I hope God may forgive you, as I have now done.'

He loosened his grasp: I ran my sleeve across my face; and as I passed over the other side, I told the sentry to take charge again of his prisoner.

It was now eight o'clock, and I was anxious to leave the ship, for I was rather a stranger on board of her: the first lieutenant ordered a boat to be manned, and I was landed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EXECUTION.

'The charge is prepared,
The judges all ranged (a terrible show!).'
Beggar's Opera.

'Then, bowing to the chaplain, who had scarcely recovered from the effects that the scene had produced upon him, and looking significantly at the provost-marshal, Peters bent his steps forward by the gangway—the noose was fastened—the gun fired—and in a moment, all was over.'

CAPT. MARRYAT'S *King's Own*.

I REMEMBER the dawn of the 19th August, 1801, as well as if it had been yesterday, and

The president said, 'We are ready, prisoner; but I think it right to caution you, that after you have begun, it will be too late to alter your mind; and that the judge-advocate, who is accustomed to aid unfortunate persons in your situation, will lend you the assistance of his powerful talent, in order, if possible, to save you from your present predicament.'

'That sounds like a broad hint,' said one of the men not a mile from me, 'that the members of the court have made up their minds.'

'Made up their minds?' said another; 'ay, long afore that: it is a fine day, and they want to be off on shore.'

'No,' said I, in a low tone of voice; 'it is much the fashion to say that justice is never done to a sailor if his captain tries him; but I don't know how it is possible to swear so solemn an oath, and yet neglect the case. But, of course, it is not much in a man's favour being tried by captains,—especially his own captain, who had already found him guilty before he wrote for the court-martial.'

Tackle began, 'Gentlemen of this honourable court,—It would I know, be the height of imprudence in me, after the evidence which has been brought before you, to stand forward and say "I am not guilty," for here around me I see many of my old messmates and shipmates;—one who has known me twenty years since as a cabin-boy on board the *Gloucester*; and one who has known me under other circumstances, which, thank God! are beyond the jurisdiction of this court.'—That was a hint for me.

'Gentlemen, I feel an inward satisfaction in now confessing my guilt: the approbation of death,—and I know it awaits me,—has vanished from my mind; for death alone can relieve me from my sufferings. I need not enter at large upon my reasons for having deserved—there is one in this court who knows that I always was a stranger to fear; and it was not the rumours of the probable action at Copenhagen which prompted me to take that step; it was a wish to return to my wife and family at home, and once more try my fortune at that line which had some years previously freed me in independence.'

I did desert, and I returned to my wife. Short was the prospect of probable contentment: the hands of justice were in pursuit of me; I knew I was traced and tracked. I hid but one course to take: I kissed my wife and children for the last time. I tore myself from the firm embrace of the one, and the affectionate cling of the others; I stole a boat, and in that boat, in the middle of the night, made sail for France. I secured my assistance to our enemies, and in doing my duty by them fell into the hands of those who now act as my judges. I am

guilty, I do not deny it; but this I deny—your power to judge me.' (All the members of the court looked at him.) 'Yes, gentlemen of this honourable court, I deny your power to judge me. A coroner's writ for murder is out against me: there stands the witness against me; he saw me murder his own sister; and I call upon you to deliver me to the civil power, for you have no jurisdiction over me.'

Here Tackle ceased: the eyes of all the court were turned upon me, and I felt quite unmanned from their scrutiny.

'Clear the court!' said the president; and in a moment we were all turned out of the cabin. The prisoner was conveyed below; and dismal was the time before the word was passed along the deck that 'the court was reopened.' In a minute or two the cabin was crammed; and never do I remember to have seen more eagerness to catch a sight of a poor devil than was manifested on this occasion. At length the shuffling of shoes subsided, and the president addressed Tackle.

'Prisoner,' said he, 'the court have considered the objections you have offered; and it is the opinion of the members that the objection should have been made previously to the examination of any witnesses against you; that now it is too late; and they therefore overrule it. You will continue your defence: the objection you have raised will be transitted, with the note, of the court-martial, to the commander-in-chief, and through him to the proper authorities elsewhere. We are ready to hear you.'

'It was but the drowning man catching at a straw,' said Tackle. 'My death, I knew, was certain; but I was willing to prolong my miserable existence, although I dread to live. I know what your sentence must be; and I have only one duty to perform to man before I am in the presence of another tribunal. It is to acknowledge my guilt to him' (here he pointed at me); 'to thank him for his exertions in my behalf with his lordship; and to declare most solemnly that I never intended to murder either him or his sister, but merely to effect my escape, by either wounding or frightening him. I do not throw myself upon the mercy of the court, for that, I know, would be unavailing: I call upon you as men to do your duty to your king, your country, and your consciences.'

Never, I suppose, was there greater astonishment than when a man dressed as a common sailor, pole as he did. There was no moving about, first on one leg and then on the other; no stretching out one hand to take it back again; but he stood as firm as a rock, and he never flinched or staggered.

I remember it well: every man hated him like poison before; but when he finished, every true heart along the decks felt for him. His red eyes never had a drop in them to

Well, the time was come that I was to take her on board; and an hour before this the chaplain had told Tackle that all hopes were over on this side the grave, and that the order had arrived for his execution on the morning of the 26th. He exhorted him to consider the awful situation in which he was placed, and no longer to cling to hope, for that was past, but to devote himself to God.

Tackle was cleanly dressed, for in that he was somewhat particular; and before I brought Jane to him, I told him she was aboard, and that, perhaps, as the child only thought she was brought to see the ship, Tackle had better not give her to understand that he was her father at first, but make a kind of acquaintance with her. Tackle agreed, and said, 'I can manage myself, Brace. The worst is past; and this meeting will finish my sufferings. I have been speaking to the master-at-arms, and he has told me that on the 26th the pain will be momentary: and this I know, for I have seen dozens hanged in former days, that the struggle is never more than a minute at most. I bore more than a minute's pain when you stabbed me and Jane died; and then I never spoke.'

I went upon deck, where the first lieutenant was showing Jane the guns and the ropes, and walking her about for the admiration of everybody. Somehow the story had got wind, and every one of the crew came to have a look at Tackle's daughter; and they felt like men for him who was shortly to part from one so young and so lovely.

I took Jane by the hand and led her round the forecastle; and I don't know what the child thought, but she heard nothing else but, 'Poor pretty soul! how I do pity her!' Once she asked me if I was going to part with her, for all the strange men seemed to pity her. I took her down the after-ladder, for the first lieutenant gave me leave, and she was now upon the main-deck, the larboard side, of the *Medusa*; for Tackle had not been removed on board the *Isis*. Only a slight canvas screen hid her from her father; and he, shackled on both legs, heard his daughter asking questions about the fire-buckets, and the hand-spikes, and the hour-glass, and the pumps. He did not dare move, because he thought the noise of the irons might startle his child; and he had covered his legs, irons and all, with a flag, so that the little girl should not see him as a prisoner. The sentry told me that never since his born days had he ever seen a man in such a state; and when the girl came round on the starboard side, Tackle got as white as a Norway crow in winter.

Well, I drew the screen on one side, and there he was! His red ferret's eyes were fixed upon the child; but there was a look of such fondness in them, that Jane seemed

to like him at once. It is an odd feeling, but I have felt it myself: children know men who love them; and although such a man may be as ugly as the figure-head of the *Neptune*, and as fierce-looking as the sign of the Saracen's head, yet I am blessed if a child who would have screamed at a highwayman would not run into his arms and kiss his jaw.

'Come, come to me,' said Tackle, as he stretched his eager arms, and raised himself upon his feet without shaking the irons. Jane ran to him, and he kissed her, and kissed her, and cried like a baby; whilst Jane kept saying, 'Why do you cry, sir,—why do you cry?' The sentry turned away, and put the point of his bayonet against the gun-carriage, turning it round and round in his hand as if he was drilling a hole; and I nearly twisted the black ribbon off my straw hat as I twirled it about, and shoved the skull-thatcher from one hand to another. Tackle had got hold of both the child's hands, and was reading every feature of her face; and the child returned the look.

'Ay,' said he, after a pause, 'every look the same as her poor mother's! There are her eyes, and this little rosy pouting lip like Jane's; ay, and I fancy her form and figure the same. Do you like me, Jane?'

The girl answered, 'Yes, indeed I do.'

'This,' continued Tackle, 'is ten times worse than the most cruel of deaths! Now would I wish to live, Brace!' said he. I looked round; and he pointed to the child, and then felt his neck. I knew what he meant; he might have talked for an hour without saying so much. He could not have held out much longer; so I took Jane by the hand to lead her away.

'Stay awhile, Brace,' said he; 'stay awhile;—why, you have not been a minute, and I cannot part with her. Come, my child, once more, and kiss your own—' He stopped; but the child, in approaching him, trod upon the irons, the flag was removed in a minute, and Jane, young as she was, knew that the man before her was a prisoner.

'You are the man,' she said, 'Lord Nelson spoke to me about; and they are going to kill you. Oh! father, father!' said she, as she grasped my hand, 'can't you save him? can't you save him?'

'I am your father!' said Tackle; and he fell back upon the seat which was placed against the gun.

The child seemed quite bewildered; and it was some time before I could get her away, and place her in the boat which conveyed her on shore. There was not a man on board the ship that did not feel for Tackle; and somehow I had so forgiven him, that I felt as if my heart had got out of its place; and if at that moment I could

as you would serve a dying man, never read it yourself—never let even your curiosity tempt you to look at one word of it: I would have it for ever rest in forgetfulness; but it is the only way I can serve you now. If Tapes does not assist you when you most need it, show him this. If he refuses what you may honestly ask, tell him of *this*, and he put his hand to his neck, 'and that he will not be long after me. This paper shall be of good service to you, Ben, or I mistake the man to whom I tell you to show the outside. You understand me, Ben?'

'I do,' said I, as I took the packet.

'You will not read it, Ben? I would not have you think worse of me than now.'

'Never, Tackle.'

'Except,' he continued, 'Tapes refuses what I know you will never ask unless pressed by necessity or borne down by infirmity. There, take it, and may it repay you for some of your kindness to one who has so seriously injured you.'

At seven bells we began to see through the port signs of the approaching execution: we heard the marines on deck under arms standing right over us; we saw the boats from the different ships putting off and drawing up on our starboard side, and Tackle looked at the solemn preparation unmoved.

The chaplain came and called Tackle's attention to the fast-flying moments of life; he urged him again and again to prayer; but Tackle said, 'Sir, I have made my peace with God, and I must now wind myself up to act as a man. But, sir,' and he took him aside—it was about Jane—he then thought of the parting. He had made no promise to walk with him to the fore-castle, and who was to take charge of the child? The chaplain was to walk before him, I by his side—and Jane! I proposed, and so did the chaplain, to send her on shore; but Tackle said he would not lose her—not until the last minute.

In the meantime the hands had been turned up, and the whistle of the ship announced that the time was growing towards a close. The boats had now mustered strong, and many people from the shore came off to see the execution. Tackle's character had gone before him, and those whose curiosity led them to witness it, seemed to feel no pity for the sufferer, for they regarded him as a murderer, as I do, and so, to the French; and at that time in England such a character was most thoroughly despised.

The chaplain went on deck, and shortly afterwards returned with a midshipman, who was instructed to take Jane into the captain's cabin directly the sailing was over.

The provost-marshal soon came, and now the last minute had come. The provost

time had expired; Tackle was summoned. He was then with his arms wound round his child, kissing her. He heard them not; but the touch soon awakened him from his stupor; he looked at her for a second, he kissed her fondly, and presented her to the chaplain. The midshipman stepped forward and took her hand; and when Tackle rose to follow the officer, the child broke from the midshipman and entwined its little arms round Tackle. I thought I should have dropped. It was now requisite to separate them; but I would not have touched either—no, not for the universal world. What! tear the daughter from the father, and he about to die? Tackle was too much overcome; and the chaplain, who was a father himself, was unmanned by the sight; he urged Tackle to collect his courage for the last desperate struggle of feeling.

The bell struck eight: the prisoner knew his last moment was come, for directly afterwards the death-toll began. He heard the bell repeat its dismal knell, and tried to separate himself, but the child clung to him the closer. At last, turning rather suddenly as the thought struck him, he said to me, 'Brace, what would Jane have thought if she had been told that thus *her* child would cling to *her* murderer?'

Jane fell back at the words, and Tackle walked to his execution. We came up the after-ladder: I looked and saw the rope there before our eyes—from the fore-yard-arm it came upon the fore-castle; the men were at divisions, the marines under arms, the officers present.

The bell was stopped, and the sentence read. Not a sound was to be heard as the captain returned the paper, and the order for the execution, to his clerk, until his voice again ordered the bell to be tolled. A party of the marines, with their arms reversed, headed by the drummer with his drum muffled, moved from the capstan; then the chaplain walked, reading the burial service; and then came Tackle and myself, the provost-marshal on one side and the master-at-arms on the other. The men all bowed as we passed, and I cannot describe the awful cold shudder which came over me. There was I laid-in-hand with my own father's murderer, and he going to pay the debt for his crime, the dead bell slowly tolling, the chaplain praying for his soul; whilst before us was the platoon that condemned the rope!

The gunner, with the lighted pot already to give the first signal, stood in waiting, and at each step Tackle's grasp became tighter. He walked, as he had said, firm, and without flinching; but when he reached the platform, and I shook his hand for the last time, his voice failed him when he said, 'My daughter—Brace my daughter! The rope was placed round his neck—his hands

him that never a lash had crossed my back. "I hope, sir," said I to Captain Conn, "you will speak to Captain Cotgrave in my favour: I'm sure I have always done my duty as a man, and fought as a seaman ought to do."

"Ben, it was touch and go with me; and if Captain Conn had not seen me under fire, and when we were hard pressed, I'm thinking I might have had a pull round the fleet to the tune of the rogue's march: but between those two and Lord Nelson, the R was taken from my name, and the only punishment I had was to be sent on board the *Isis* to clap on the yard-rope. But I'm blessed if I lent a hand, for I never tightened my grip; and I'm ready to swear a Bible oath that I did not trice up that red-headed rogue."

"Well, he's gone, whether you triced him up or not; and he died like a man. Of all things, it most astonished me how a chap with such a conscience could swing so lightly. Now he is gone I forgive him; and all I hope is, that his name will never come back to my memory again. Well, Tom, and how has the world used you since we last met, and when we used to sit under the lee of the weather-bulwark and spin yarns, or clap ourselves on the combings of the hatchway, whilst the other took his station in the tier to parcel our tails—what have you been about?"

"Why, it's rather hard to say," replied Tom. "I was in the *Culloden* at the Nile, and looked on whilst you were hard at work: I never knew you were in the *Vanguard* until I heard that you had never left Lord Nelson. Why, I don't know much what I have been about; but this I know, that I hate a small craft; they are always wet; and while bobbing about the Channel, I don't think I have ever had a dry foot."

"Ah!" said I, "my old mess-mate and ship-mate, you are a lucky fellow to have weathered the boatswain's mate, and the skippers with their cocked-hats on. I'm blessed if ever I shall see a captain with his gold-laced scraper on in a cabin, but I shall think of the business you and I have been concerned in!"

Nelson was now in great fear for poor Captain Parker, who had received a severe wound in that business at Boulogne, and I'm sure I carried a hundred notes from the admiral to Dr. Bard concerning him. When he died, I was sent for a lock of his hair, which Nelson declared should be buried with him whenever the day of his death should arrive.

The flag of the admiral, after the execution of Tackle, was shifted to the *Imazon*; and in that ship, or in that ship's books, for I was mostly on shore, we remained until the middle of October, when the Peace of Amiens was signed, and we took our leave

of ships for a while, and went down to Merton in Surrey, a place which Nelson bought, and which was shared by Lady Hamilton.

The man who fought the battle of the Nile, St. Vincent, Teneriffe, Copenhagen, and one hundred and fifty others, and who was now forty-three years of age, was obliged to take to fly-fishing for amusement. I have been with him, carrying a basket up and down the banks of the Wandle, for hours, whilst the admiral used to be flogging the water to find a fish. He might have been a good one at it when he had both flippers; but he never would have made a fortune as a left-handed fisherman. But he was just as active, just as much occupied in endeavouring to catch fish, as he was to catch the French fleet when we sailed about the Mediterranean before the battle of the Nile: in short, whenever he set about anything, he always gave his whole attention to it. It was about this time that I got married.

In this way, always being very busy doing nothing, we went on until the year 1803, when Sir William Hamilton died. He died in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand. I don't know what passed there, for I was not in the room; but I often heard him say afterwards, "I received her from her dying husband." Deaths had been so common in the family, that they bore this better than those which went before him. A man may get accustomed to anything but living on shore on midshipman's half-pay,—nothing a day and find yourself.

It was on the 16th of May, 1803, that the King told the nation that he had had a rupture with the Frenchman; and the consequence was, we went to war. Well, there were lots of work in the dockyards: the press-gangs were out every night, and they made a sailor of a man with a long-tailed coat before he could change his habits. Ships were fitted out; fleets were prepared; Lord Nelson was appointed to the *Victory*, as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean; and on the 20th of May we sailed for that station in company with the *Amphion* frigate.

I have often thought that if they wished to punish an admiral in the next world, the black gentleman has only to appoint him to the command of the blockade squadron, and supersede the dog with three heads. I'm blessed if that wouldn't be a greater punishment than grilling him inside the gates! And in this life there's nothing half so bad as polishing Cape Sicily, and keeping for months and months standing in and off shore, eating salt provisions—but I never had much of that—and going week after week through the same operations of tackling and wearing, heaving-to and making-sail. Nelson never stuck close to the har-

ers' mouth to keep them in, he was always for letting them out—and every now and then he would let them out to escape from the prison, and then to his credit he would let them go, and then to his credit he would let them go.

[illegible]

Plum and the party then with him, we
 took a good dinner and then returned to
 the hotel. I was with the foreman,
 from whom I learned that Andy Villeneuve
 had taken possession of Mark's place with
 eleven sheep, the head, seven cattle, and
 two horses. We went out in the night and
 they had a fire of the St. Lawrence, we im-
 mediate went to work, but although we
 carried a lantern, to have lost it would
 have cost a great deal, as we had to go
 never got out of the house, and we
 of April, and then it blew a storm, and
 end that was all, and I got the St. Lawrence
 on over and under the mountain, and
 on the 20th of May, the wind blew away
 everything out from the mountain, and
 the water, and we went.

to him, and trying to make them believe that they are, like dogs, taken, stolen, whipped, and kicked by every man with a pair of epaulettes, who happens to walk a quarter-deck.

As for corporal punishment then—which means a little back-scratching—I think I may say that it could not be abolished without injury to the service. When the wind is whistling, the rain pouring down, the sea getting up, and the after-guard, main, mizen top-men, and marines are lugging away at the weather fore-topsail-brace, with their eyes all running over with rain-water, and their tails blowing over to leeward—I say, when it is a dark, dirty, murky, rainy, windy, snowy night, there is many a man who prefers a hammock to a wet jack-t. Of course, if these men remain skulking below, the duty will fall the heavier upon the men aloft. Now, it is nothing but the fear of the cat and her tails that keeps such fellows from sleeping; and if you put them in irons, why, you only encourage their idleness. You may make them pick oakum, and that's all you can do. You may stop their grog, and they will get more than their allowance from their shipmates. You may clap them in the black list, but that is a bad remedy; nothing breaks a good man's heart more than being mixed up with the fellows on that list;—and perhaps he may have dozed a bit on the look-out, or the officer of the watch may have seen a stranger before him.

Let them be educated, say some: I say, no, you'll make them worse. Instead of talking of the good old times, spinning a yarn about the Nile, running up one's memory about Nelson, and such like, they would all be squatting about the decks like a set of Turks, with newspapers before them, settling the affairs of the nation, and talking about that which none of them understand! Let them alone; they are needed, and they think less of the disgrace than they think; and when we have officers who are so humiliated, they are brave, we have little to fear from tyranny, and that tyranny can always be stopped.

Now, they talk of registering merchant-seamen, and they take up capital and credit to themselves for it; what Nelson proved it in the year 1803; for I remember being taken down to the House of Lords, and hearing him speak to all the lords in the kingdom, showing them plans for more easily manning the navy, and preventing desertion by bettering the condition of the seamen. He proposed that their certificates should be registered, and that every man who had served with a good character five years during the war should receive a bounty of two pounds annually for that time, and four pounds after eight years. And I think every boy who sails on any

has heard that there was a parliament act for any waterman between the age of eighteen and fifty, capable of serving his Majesty afloat, who registered themselves, to have a bounty of two pounds a year beside their pay, and not to serve after fifty-five, but to have the bounty. But then, if they deserted, do you see, they were to lose the bounty, and to serve six months without any pay. That's all fair enough: the man takes the bounty to stand by his bargain; if he deserts, he ought to be punished—and if to an enemy, he ought to be hanged. Now, my idea is this:—that to register seamen may be very good for those who have to register them; but as for any benefit arising out of it, I doubt it; because why? impressment is never used but when the necessity is urgent—when it is requisite to man ships in a hurry. Now, supposing the registered men are sailing about the wide world in merchant ships, how are you to get them to Portsmouth to fit out the *Victory*? Why, you may send your registering gentleman, with old Scraggs the town-crier's bell, from Johnny Groat's house to the Land's End, giving notice; but how is Tom Wilkins, John Smith, Edward Thornhill, or Robert Potts to hear him?

Well, let us say that there are thirty thousand men registered in time of peace: war comes suddenly, and impressment has been done away with: the muster-books are sent for, and out of the thirty thousand seamen, twenty-five thousand are found to be afloat; some amongst those Chinese chaps getting stuff about as good as what we get off our hedges in spring; some at the Feejee Islands, stealing men's teeth to clap into clubs, and bringing them home as curiosities; some out in the West Indies, working their souls out by drinking new rum; and some gone to Mexico, to bring home the dollars from the mines, which have never come home yet, and never will.

Well, as I said, it's a war. Out come about a score of privateers from Dunkirk, St. Maloes, Dieppe, and from every hole where the flood-tide rises three feet. They snap up a craft here, and raze land and burn a house there; every man fore and aft the country is alarmed; and all the while there are the ships in Rotten Row without a man on board of them; whilst, had impressment been the fashion, every mother's son of those idle fellows, who are very busy doing nothing but what is wrong, would have been made honest men—would have defended their country.

It's all impressment; for if you tell in with a merchant-ship, and you wanted men, you would not ask if it was Tom, Dick, or Harry's rum; but a sufficient crew would be left to manage her, and you would walk off with the rest. If this is not impressment, it is something very like it.

a most unpleasant service ; and in this case, if we had taken the rest, we might have strained a point and released the shoemaker.'

'Oh ! do, sir, do !' said the woman ; and, she extended her arms to clasp the officer and bless him ; but she saw that it was all over, and having got a few yards distant, fired a volley of mud at us. She was one of your regular ladies who act wives every night of impressment. Now both those lads—for they both turned out to be seafaring men—are now in Greenwich ; and it's many a time I have heard them say, that this was the luckiest night they had ever known.

What is the use of your parliament-men talking about fine feelings?—everybody has got fine feelings ; but who the devil is to man the ships ? that's the question. If you can find any way to man the navy with fine feelings and without impressment, why do it ; it's no fun to have your head split by a pewter-pot.

Take my word for it, if a parcel of those chattering fellows who want to get into the Parliament-house, and who make men discontented, in order, as they say, that they may make them happy afterwards, were to hold their tongues upon this subject, we should go on just as well as ever ; and the impressed men, like Leathersoles, might live to call it a blessing, rather than rant about it as a curse.

'Ah !' said they, 'God bless the press-gang ! or we should have been obliged to work to the last day of our life. Whereas, now we can lay down the load, and have our old shipmates to carry us to the grave ; and when we make our last board, which we know we shall from Greenwich-reach, why then we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have run through our service like a vessel through the trade-winds, and come safe into harbour at last. Why, after all, what is a sailor's life, but one of change and chance ? Is it not much to say, that a man has been where birds stand upon one leg, and where elephants run about like lap-dogs ; where the monkeys pelt you with coconuts, and the snakes dance to good music ? And then, when we anchor at last, and get spiced for a full day, why, it is some consolation, when we hear of any news from foreign parts, to know all about the place and the people.'

As we rub on through life, many are the strange things we see ; and we grow, and some rise upon alligators instead of horses, and like the trot ; but I like everything in the natural way ; and a spanker-boom in a boat is quite enough for me. Then as to punishments for pleasure, I have occasionally strayed rather wild ; but it has been after the duty was done. I never skulked, and left others to do what I ought to have done ; and although the

has whistled over the backs of thousands, not a lash of its tail ever crossed my shoulders.

I remember a gentleman with long tails to his coat, asking me one day, 'if Nelson, who was so great an admiral, punished severely, or not.'

'He did,' I replied : 'he never made game of anything excepting his own blindness, and he knew that an example should be such that people would fear its repetition ; but he was never cruel.' Now-a-days, they want to alter all this : they tell us, if you educate the men, they will have a more honourable feeling, and the cat may be abolished. Now, as I have said, I don't think so. As to education, a seaman gets as much of that in the fore-top, or round the galley-fire, as he wants ; and if he's a good man, he never need fear the gratings, either alive or dead ; and if he is one who is shutting his eyes, when it's 'reef top-sails' on a cold night, why, he is none the worse for being warmed. They never can do without it, depend upon it. We have got rid of all the tyrants,—and we have had some of them, and then came mutiny and murder : but now, such things can't occur. When that affair did take place, it was all owing to a parcel of sea-lawyers and chaps who used to get about them and make them believe the mischief was greater than it really was.

CHAPTER XX.

THE END OF THE LOVE STORY.

'Oh Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My vows are all ever true remain
Let me kiss off that falling tear !'
Bar. Reginald Selous.

It was after that Copenhagen affair, after we had chased the French fleet to the West Indies, and when the admiral gave up the command to Cornwallis, that I had time to look about me on shore. The first thing I did was to write to Grima, and a letter about my cottage, the trial, and all about the end of that unpleasant business. He told me the proceeds of the house were sunk in the auctioneer's bill and his own attorney's costs, that he had paid me five hundred, which I was to receive when I called upon him, and he was to give me a proper receipt and winding-up of my business, and a receipt. That I ought to mind that no tidings had ever been heard of Thistle, excepting that he went to the service ; but of his trial, he they were

curious old seal out of his desk, and he claps his own signal on the letter, saying, 'If this is opened and read, I stop the money—do you understand? If you keep the secret, which I dare say has been entrusted to you, you shall never want, or your wife, or her children. Now, steer away, and don't let me see you again, for you know too much for me to like you.' So, as soon as I had pocketed the letter and drunk his health in some smuggled brandy, I staved back to my wife, and made her happy with the news.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A SAILOR'S WEDDING LONG AGO.

'A soldier and a sailor
Had once a doubtful strife, sir,
To make a maid a wife, sir,
Whose name was Buxom Jann.'
Love for Love.

WE are curious chaps, we sailors, in regard to marriages, and many's the one I have seen. When your great lords and gentlemen get spliced, they make signals from the hats of their servants, so that all the world may know of the event. And we do something like that; for if a fore-top-man gets spliced, we hang some ribbon from the topmast stay; if a gunner, from the main stay; and then we sit down and *stay* long enough over our grog to make us forget ourselves. So we only do at the beginning what others wish to do after they are spliced.

I remember old Tom telling me of his marriage; but I'm hes'ed if I don't think Tom had as many wives as the Grand Turk; and as the Turk got rid of them by sending them a drift on the sea, Tom went the other way to work, for he went ashore him chaps, and, as I don't say, 'he showed his colors, and put 'em in range.' He told me the following yarn, which I clip in here out of its place, just because it places me.

'It was after the battle of Trafalgar,' Tom began, when we met, 'I will be bound to offer, and when I had leaved my vessel, and was anchored for life, I had got my limbs, according to the description book, and when the fleet had arrived at Plymouth, for I belonged to the *Rapier*, and I had my liberty to go on shore for three days.'

'The girls were all for the sailor then. A soldier might have imagined about his regulation step, or the English one for performing the goose-step, or a dancing man South American, he might have enjoyed about the Point in his white breeches, and leggings, his hair waving in the wind, and

until he danced the coat off his back—he fore any one of the craft would have looked at him.

'Of course, when we got on shore, the first thing we did was to steer to the back of the Point, and make up the leeway of our spirit-room. It is all right enough having an allowance on board ship, but it never does on shore. To tell a man not to get drunk, is like saying to a drowning man, "Don't drink salt-water." There we were just as happy as lords—we drank like fishes to the glory of the *Victory*; and as long as we could keep our mouths *abov* water, we drank and cheered, and sang, until we began to dance to the penn'orth of tune old Catgut was pleased to play.

'Well, we had lots of women in company; and amongst these was one Betsy Matson, a round, plump-looking rosy-faced girl, who had always a smile upon her face, and showed, when her little red lips were opened, as white a set of head-rails as any ship in the navy. Directly I saw her, I felt my heart somehow sicken—it was just as unpleasant a feeling as the first cut of the cat. I nearly turned sick, and was struck all of a heap.

"Ma'am," said I, "will you dance a step with me?"

"Yes, surely," she answered; and up we stood for a tent. I started rather wild; for every now and then, as we were navigating in and out in the red, I ran foul of my partner: she always smiled so good-naturedly, that when we had finished, I thought it was all proper to show my fondness; so I just put my arm round her wrist, and I gave her a kiss; when a decent-looking chap of a soldier gave me another kind of a slap, and, "Sailor," said he, "not so free till better acquainted. I love that young woman, and neither you nor any other man shall kiss her."

'It was the cut of a head, a property; and as it was common, I put amongst old Cat-bury that I was a head chump. We gave her fair play. Our quarrel of our kind stood by him. We ordered in a pot of porter for both of us; and as I passed Betsy, and caught her under her eye, and she, "I love you better, I like to know the young soldier these two years; but I'm a deal for that dear little sailor here."

"Well, then," said I, "it's a standing right to the good prize. My hand is yet." I love you from the bottom of my heart, Betsy." So I latched up my trousers, and as I did it, I gave her a quint of the young soldier's of the kind, and says I, "That's Tom Topgal, who has been drinking society with two-and-thirty pounds a year she's at once—or you know, Ben, we had four on the *Savanna* at one time, who is going to strike his flag, or do as he pleases, or as he likes, or as he likes."

sat down for a jollification. Betsy was now a little less the worse for liquor than before, and I wanted her to take another glass, because I thought, poor girl, what she must feel at the thoughts of leaving the soldier, and all her friends, to live abroad with me when the ship was in harbour.

"No," says she, "no more, my dear Tom; but I'm thinking we had better go and get me some new ribbons for to-morrow; you see, mine are none the cleaner for last night's business; besides, you know that I must look clean and tidy, or I shall not be much credit to one of the *Sovereign's* crew."

"That's all as it should be, Betsy," said I; "I like a tidy craft; so up anchor, and away we go. Bill Jones will give you a rowlock for your larboard oar; and here's mine for the other." So out we bolted, and sailed up the street in search of a shop. Betsy knew the navigation well; although, before long, we had contrived to run foul of a number of shore-going lubbers—for though we understood the sailing orders, "Ships on the starboard tack to keep their wind, and those on the larboard tack to bear up," yet they knew nothing of navigation, and were with every flaw of wind sailing right athwart us. Everybody looked at us; every one knew we belonged to Collingwood's ship, and certainly never was there more respectful behaviour like, for they all tried to get out of our way; and as we were trying to do the same, we fell foul of one another. Betsy wanted some red ribbons; but I said, "No, you shan't carry any false colours!—true blue never stains." So I made her clap on a blue ribbon in the cap and round her dear little chess trees, and bought a pair of blue shoes, after she had fastened some blue ribbon round the bottom of her dress. All this being done, I made sail back to the Jolly Sailors, and had a regular *voilà* before we turned in. There was dancing, and drinking, and kissing the bride; such cheering and singing, and fiddling, that the air was never so good when I turned out the next morning. My head was made sore by the fiddling.

"Well, what a night!" I said, when at eight o'clock, and that I was never so glad about it; never so satisfied, since I was at Portsmouth since the first day of my marriage. Bill and I, and our new friends, were all wined, from the master down to the ward-bearer; and Betsy looked a noble, rosy-winded wife, and she looked out, and I was glad. It was a sight for claps, such as was, belonging to the *Sovereign*, to be married like a parcel of fools, who made a noise to church with their singing, and turn all attention before the priest, and I was glad enough for them to do so, for the fact that I was not arguing to the contrary, was in that fashion. So, in the morning, I was

my shipmates, and then set about the order of sailing. We were twelve belonging to the *Sovereign*, and Betsy had six belonging to her, to sail in her wake. They were all dressed alike, but Betsy was worth them all. We were to be spliced at ten, and we had only two hours to get the convoy together.

"I felt my pockets—my money was safe; and I was up to the mark to do the thing like a good un. So I ordered all the coaches I could find. I got together six decent-looking articles, and we clapped our colours at the mast-head of the coachman. Some one said, they ought to be white; and I think it was old Drinkhard the landlord; but Bill, who had just taken a glass to the success of the day, shoved his fist in the old fellow's mouth; and says he, "White! why, you fool, do you think we are a going to show a flag of truce to the parson? No, no; blue's our colour; and if we go all fair and above-board, that's only what we ought to do: so up with the blue at the man;—and we shoved large cockades into the hats, and made the horse-whippers show another from the breastwork of their button-holes."

"Of course, bringing all the vehicles together in this manner made a bit of a stir amongst the folks about the Point; and they had time enough to reconnoitre our force for when we got the carriages in line, as we intended to start, we have about for a good swig to the honour of the bride; and in order to keep up the hearts of the women, we made them hoist in enough to fill their spirit rooms. Well, time went on, and a quarter to ten came. "Now," says Bill, "heave and a weigh, my lads; and come, stick on the colours, and hurrah aloft!" So up I jumped, and headed Betsy into the cabin of the coach with three more of her tribe, whilst I and Bill got on the quarter-deck.

"Heave and pull," said Watson. "I'm not going in this jolly boat on wheels! I'll ride a horse, and keep a look out ahead of the squadron; and what's more, I've one coming, and here it is, so a vast heaving a minute. It's the king's colours to the glory, and forward!" and he clapped a bunch of blue ribbons round the collar of the *Sovereign's* groom right to the ears, and another time a new law, and the groomist's hat for a new head, they'll see it's colours even on our horse's tails! Jump up, you men, and Watson, behind me, and now the off. Away it was, sure enough, the king's colours were much better to the king, and the groomist's hat. What was the old fellow's play? and the king's colours were much better to the king, and the groomist's hat.

"Now, that's the way to the top of the coach, and Bill and I, and the groomist, who had put on the quarter-deck, the coach, the old fellow's play, and the king's colours were much better to the king, and the groomist's hat.

back; "and mind, do you hear? 'Victualled on board the day discharged!'"

"Come on deck here," said Bill; "and, do you hear? turn to and dance us a hornpipe as we go along. Strike up, old Scrape-hard! and tip us your best hornpipe; and, squadron, make sail!"

In a short time we had got off the harbour and were unlading the cargo, when Joe came along, going about fourteen knots, his tider-ropes lost, and his ship running away with him.

"Shorten sail," said Bill, "or you'll be aboard the church."

"Luff, Joe, luff, and weather it," said I. "My eyes! there he goes, right end on!" and down came the horses, pitching Joe over the bows.

Nothing ever hurt his health but going without his grog. He was up in a moment, and reported that his ship was wrecked, her stem-piece stove in, and that she was bilged and lying over on her starboard side. The crew were all safe, and we prepared to enter the harbour. I caught hold of Betsy by the slipper; and Bill was behind with Moll Davis. She was rather the worse for her allowance in the morning, and would sing, although a chap who said he was a clerk in the establishment tried to stop her.

"To the devil wid you!" said Moll Davis. "Do you think, you black looking raven, that I won't sing a song on the day of Betsy's marriage?" And she set off at the top of her voice, which was rather thick and hoarse than otherwise, and she belied it out something about a "sweet Will in." Now it so turned out that William was the name of the soldier; and Betsy, thinking it was meant for a shot at her, turned round and whipped off the ribbon from her bonnet in a trice. I caught hold of Betsy by the arm, and Bill held Moll Davis, or we should have had a fight before marriage, for all the other women rushed up to take Betsy's part, except one or two, who always liked a fight, and I crept out of the vessel side in order to make sure of one. This brought us all to our reason, and we walked into the church in a quiet and assemling manner at a funeral.

"Well, we were all married one day, and of each other round about, and he began to read something, with none of us could be more certain, and I looked me full in the face with one eye, and he, "Will you give this woman to be thy wedded wife?" Now the parson squinted a bit with the other, and I caught his eye, which was looking towards his starboard ear, was upon Moll Davis, and I understood the words to mean what I would take Moll Davis to my wedded wife, and thought that this was a kind of sailing piece after the war, I fancied. "I will,"

not, sir; she's abused her shamefully, and when this is over she may box her trotters where she likes." Bill cut in, and said he, "I think Tom is right; for she had no business to sing what she did." And Betsy said, "No, your reverence; she shan't come to me."

The clerk began to say something; but Bill soon stopped him by saying, "Avast heaving, young man! hadn't you better take a reef in your jawing-tacks, and double your distance?"

The clergyman explained what it meant, and he asked me again: "Certainly, sir," said I; "I come here for that same purpose."

"You must say," said the clerk, "*I will.*"

"Certainly!" said I.

"That won't do," continued the devil-dodger; "you must say only, *I will.*"

"*I will,*" says I; "and now I hope you are satisfied."

"We got through the business in about a quarter of an hour; and we were then taken back into a room to sign our names.

"Well, I never could write, for I never had no education like; so I clipped a cross, such as we make to the paper about the prize-agents. Well, Betsy could not write, so she stuck another. Then they told Bill he must witness it, and he couldn't write either; and then Moll Davis made her mark, which was a large black blot on the book; for she was then all now, and rubbed down the pen, and then shoved it a smart in the clerk's muzzle. But the best of all was Bill when he heard the little chap in black ask for a fee:

"What's that?" said Bill; "I never heard that sign before."

"It's money I want," said the clerk; "any little gift—a crown or so."

"Take that upon your crown," said Bill; and he put the clerk's hat on, and giving it a rap flattened it to the sheet, and only left the mouth and chin to be seen.

"Now then," said I, "let all hands and kissed Betsy, "the ceremony is finished, and let's have a rattle round the town." And, perhaps," said I, "very prettily—" perhaps your worship will come with us?—we won't show you in the cabin; you shall be up aloft amongst the seamen on the quarter-deck, and as you entered the ship is properly worked." And I am blessed if I don't think I thought we were going to press him for the fee, and off, leaving his clerk to be paid.

Now, however, he was gone, than did the clerk follow followed us out, and began to say some thing quite disrespectful to Bill, and, as he passed round, took care to come under his arm, and clanked him in among the women. They began to play "none of my child," and showed in about them. Another, until, as we were sailing, and a good many, the door flew

danger from their enemy. But just cow them at first—just, as we say, take the shine out of them—and when they turn round to run, freshen their way a little by a few raking shots, and they never will face about again. Now here they are very unlike the Spaniard; you can't get him to go forward so easily; but clap him behind a stone-wall, and there he'll remain feasting upon garlic, smoking tobacco, and just as difficult to be killed as a badger in a hole. On sea or on shore Frenchmen are the same. If they can face you well at first, they will give you plenty of trouble; if you can outface them, they are done. When once one flag comes down, they send chaps to the signal halyards in every ship of the fleet.

After our arrival at Portsmouth, we went to Merton. *She* was there, as lovely as ever. She received him; she loved him, she never lost sight of him; and when he used to get melancholy and walk in the garden, as if to avoid everybody and talk to himself, she used to meet him; and then he was no more of an admiral than I am; his flag was struck before a shot was fired, and he was walked off like a ship into an enemy's port. I used to be fond of gardening—that is, taking up the weeds and watering the flowers; it's like flogging the skulker and rewarding the good man. To be sure, I did not know much about the thing; but it kept me employed; and when a man is employed, he keeps out of mischief.

Nelson did not like this shore-going life; he would start up and walk round and round the walks of the garden, without stopping, for hours. He put me in mind of that curious little creature the armadillo, who goes round and round, like a cooper round a ask, and seems never to get tired.

I was at work as usual, when I heard them coming along. Nelson was talking about his unsuccessful search after the French fleet when we went to the West Indies; and she was comforting him, and telling him that he would yet have that fleet, and that he would return to her victorious. I could see them plainly. Nelson had tears in his eyes when I looked at this beautiful creature, and said he, 'Brave Emma, good Emma! if there were more Emmas, there would be more Nelsons.'

I don't know how it is, but it is so; the greater a man is, the more sure he is to be conquered by women. I never saw a braver man, who was known in the ship, and a brave straight-forward fellow, that had not six wives.

It was on the 14th September, 1805, that we left Merton again. The command of the fleet had been given to Nelson, and I was despatched early in the morning to Portsmouth to set the cabin to rights, so that I did not see the last parting between Nelson

and her; but I heard afterwards that he had some slight jog on the elbow that he might not come back again. I got on board; and the next morning you might have seen me with my round jacket and Gunsey, all a-taunto, and stuck up as stiff as a midshipman on half-pay steering the barge to Sally Port.

I have seen many a sight in my born days—I saw the King and all Naples come out to see Nelson; but I'm blessed if ever I remember to have seen such a sight as I saw on the 14th September. Every man and boy of Ports-mouth and a precious gang they were, for there was every man from the mayor to the sweeper, and every woman, from the Lady of the Mountain to Sal from the back of the Point all mustered in the streets and along the parapets to see him off. Some of them knelt down for his blessing, and others blubbered like boiling lobsters; many held up their hands aloft; and never yet, since England was England, was there ever such a sight seen. We have had men as great as Nelson—and one now living, God bless him—who have done their duty to their king and their country; and we have seen them cheered—ay, and they ought always to have been cheered. I remember, when Nelson lay wounded in his bed in Bond Street, after the business of Teneriffe, and the mob came to make him light up his windows, when they heard it was Nelson, instead of following their old pranks, they gave three cheers, and left him to sleep in quiet.

We sailed from Spithead. I think I see the ship under weigh now. We stood out under easy canvas, for there were some shore-boats alongside, with one or two of the wives of some of the crew, and Nelson did not crack on for half an hour, knowing that the distance would soon be made up, and willing to give the poor fellows time to say the last word; and we all know, that no sooner has the boat shoved off, than in our hurry we have forgotten to say what we wished most remembered. At last they were off, and the hands were turned up. 'Mile-a-hill.' Then it was that the handkerchiefs were waving, the women crying, and many a man did a clean heartedness which did not before; to the crew of the *Victory*.

We had with us the *Box*, *Pelican*, *Agassiz*, *Porpoise*, and *Porpoise*. There was our old friend the *Agassiz*, sticking to us like a leech, and it was quite a pleasure, when I

I don't bid that this expression would bid say well to Dublin; if it would do for him, it is good enough for me; but I am ready to acknowledge that it does not *correspond* with the *Tales* of the *Tar*. I never knew the *Tails correspond* with one another.)

'I bid to droop like a lily to die.'

'And a Betty shoves off for the shore?'

had broken its top, and I saw it before it cleared the topsail-yard. Every eye was turned to her; but I made out the numbers first; and there it was as large as the flags could make it, 'The enemy have put to sea.' Every man fore and aft knew it as soon as the admiral; for the signal lieutenant, who had got the book, could not report such a signal in the usual cold manner, but he called out from the break of the poop as he bundled over the leaves, 'The enemy have put to sea, my lord!'

As a pretty deal of curiosity had been excited from the first signal, and as the men got nearer the gangways than they usually did, the signal was heard by those on the look-out, and the ship shook with the tramp of the men as they scudded on deck to look at the *Mars*.

'Steer south-east,' said the admiral, 'and make more sail!' That was soon done. We did not want the hands turned up. I believe, if Nelson had called out to turn the ship inside out, it would have been done in the turn of a hand-pike.

The day closed; the signal had been repeated; and the men, fore and aft, began to get together in small numbers, and they were talking over the chances. Many of them had been at Copenhagen; some in the Nile, and with St. Vincent; and all had been more or less pretty warmly engaged at one time or another. Powder and shot were nothing new to them; and it would have been quite sufficient to convince Villeneuve, had he only listened to the yarns that were spun that night, and the confidence of every man and boy on board the *Urago*, that the combined fleet would sail into Portsmouth without troubling either the French or the Spaniards to navigate or to work them.

I have often thought since of the cooling of the men on that night. Sailors are men just as much as those gentlemen who wear swallow tails, coats and then labour to do their duty; they think of others as well as themselves, and give many an anxious thought for the well-being of their shipmates, and who are the better of their weary day's thought and trouble the next morning. Now we knew that the next day we were yet tackled with one of the fiercest fleets we knew who committed no mistake. I do not want any list to come out of this, but I tell us, that if they had not been so tired, we should not have taken our first day's work so easily.

I was coming along the fore-castle, thinking my own thoughts, and wondering what part company we were to have, and wondering for the next week, that I was expected to go to heaven with my hands up, and who should I be pendent between two of the guns, and looking at the enemy as a

before punishment is given to the enemy on the side of the minister of justice.

boatswain's mates and their cats, than Bob Matson!

There was not a finer fellow in the whole fleet than Bob Matson. He was a fore-topman; a regular dare-devil; always in danger; the first to volunteer for any work except swab-wringing; and a man who took his allowance of grog at sea, and his pleasure ashore, as well as any man in the whole service. Well, there he was, doubled up like a tailor at work, with his hands together, looking for all the world like a duck in a thunderstorm.

'What cheer, messmate?' said I. 'Why, Bob, you look precious down in the mouth; and you're pumping up all the wind of your stomach to make a sigh. What's the matter, lad?'

'It's all over, Fanny,' said he; 'I shall never see you any more!'

'See whom?' said I.

'See her!' said he, 'my own little darling daughter! She is about three years old now,' he continued; 'and when we were fitting out at Portsmouth, there was not a man in the mess who did not love her. We used to clap her on the table; and then each of us would coax her to come and eat with us, and I always thought that the one she went to was envied by the others; and if she went constantly to one, I felt as if I did not like him, because I thought he was robbing me of what was mine by right; and though I loved him for loving her, yet I felt that I would rather he came to me. Then, Ben, you know, she used to pull our tails and laugh; and, Lord love her dear little soul! I did hope then to have seen her many and many a time before I went to Davy Jones's locker. But now it's all over; I shall never see her any more! It's not for myself I care the value of a quid; I'm used to be shot at, and there now, yet was a hot head that Ben Matson would be shot at; but now, Ben, I'm not so certain that I don't wish myself out of this business; I feel very queer.'

'Why, Bob,' said I, 'this is not like you; when the topsail was blowing out of the fore-topmast, no one else would go on it, you would be out at the yard-arm, when every man of the sail was nearer a furlong to his life than half the shot from my feet. But now to strike your head against your own skull, and to sink before you've had time to pump up the shlosh, that's not like you. What are you going to do, my friend? not you. They say an' what the soldiers say. Every bullet has its hole. Well, what then? why, if we are to go, we must help ourselves, and we may as well keep our heads up until we are knocked down.'

'That's all right enough, Ben, and I need to say so,' he said; 'but I've been to the

there?' and he pointed to the fore-castle after-port.

'Certainly not,' I replied; 'and when I see a man like you, who is always foremost in any fun, singing the best song, and dancing the best and quickest step, and never asking to go on shore, I can't think that so light a pair of heels could carry so smartly a heavy weight of heart. So, if you are going to run a rig upon me, Bob, why away you go; it would make the sand run through the glass the faster, and he must be a curious man who could sleep soundly with that large fleet in sight.'

'That's true enough, Ben; but I never sleep. I shut my eyes and I rest my limbs; but a man who has done what I have done never sleeps, Ben;—he never sleeps, I tell you. The parson may talk what he likes about heaven and hell—where the first may be I don't know, but for the last, Ben, it's here!' and he beat his heart. 'I'll tell it you all; but first let me caution you, that although that Peak of Pico, that we saw not four months back, has cold snow on its outside and looks always calm and still, yet it has fire within it. You'll not say a word about what I am going to tell you, Ben;—you won't, when all that's left of Bob Matson is shoved over the standing part of the fore-sheet—you won't say, Ben—Never mind thinking of Bob—he died too good a death for a *murderer*!'

I jump'd up, but he caught me by my arm.

'What! would you blow the gaff upon me, Ben? Come, sit down, hear me out; the devil's never so black as he is painted; and it may happen that even a murderer may find an excuse for his crime.'

I'm blessed if I did not shake like a rope again in a breeze, and my heart went flap against my ribs as the topsails against the mast in a calm with a heavy swell running. 'Think'st thou,' I said, 'this can't be Tackle's ghost, for he teach'd me?' and although I have heard of these phantoms turning a ship right over during the night, and the crew only finding it out the next morning by the ship being wet, and every lamplight having a turn in its clews, yet I never believed in those things, and always thought that when I turned out like the 'Nob-de' who drank the boatswain's grog; so I looked at him again, and says I, 'Whatever it may be, Bob, I'd rather not hear it; you've been a favourite in the ship, they tell me; and I have seen too much of the end of one of your class ever to look on it again.'

'They, and arm!' said he, as he looked up and pointed to the fore-castle arm, while the moon came full upon his countenance, and showed me a face as white as snow. 'I don't fear that,' he continued. 'There are no eyes here could bear witness of what I say, and they won't. I would not care to tell the

reach of the master-at-arms. Now, Ben, listen to a short account of my life. I'm only thirty now—but thirty years looks a long time if we are to wait that time; but when we have lived it, one hour's quick conversation, and we may run over every occurrence of good or evil worth mentioning; the rest is made up of doing nothing, and the world helping us. It's no use my telling you my name—I'm under that of a purser, of course; no man deserts from a ship or commits a crime, and then sails about the world with his proper name in the watchbill; if he did, every time the mate mustered him, he would think the hour was come for the court-martial, and he would never be able to look happy when his heart was sad. Ben, there's hardly a trade of any daring that I have not been concerned in: I've been a bit of a smuggler, a bit of a pirate, a bit of a privateer's man; and when I was not employed afloat, I looked after the concern ashore.'

'What concern?' said I.

'Why,' he continued, 'robbing is a trade which requires one always to be practising, because it demands a constant exercise of cunning and courage. Any man may pick up a purse when he finds it on the high road, and no one is looking on to tell who took it; but when you have to filch it first, and fight for it afterwards; or this,—and he drew his hand across his throat,—and then plunder pirate-like; why, it requires some steadiness of heart and hand: so that when I was not concerned on board, I used to keep myself ready, by seizing hold of any one passing by the lonely road; and if a woman, why she would at once make a main-top-sail haul, and scud for it. But I seldom touched these poor devils, for they never went about with anything else but a few coppers or a crooked sixpence, and they used to swear the latter always brought good luck to them, but that their curse, if it was stolen, would make it more unlucky to the possessor. And strange, Ben, as it may appear to you, yet I'd swear it was so afraid of an old woman's curse, that I would rather have faced ten men than one of those devils in petticoats. What between a little plunder afloat and a little pilfering on shore—for one was a good haul that we made—I thought it was better to em and run for the States and see what honesty would do for a man who had made a little wickedness his specialty. At the time of which I speak, although French privateers were skimming about the seas, it was not unusual for many people to emigrate; and as I had enough—to be sure, not honestly gotten—to start me in life, I thought that with good health, a strong arm, and constant employment, I might get a clear conscience, and satisfy myself that the little I had made in an evil world, at an

man, got on the top of a Bristol coach, and the next day saw the sea, and with it my hopes of escape.

'In the papers I soon read—for I can read, aye, and write too—the full account of the whole affair:—thank God! the gentleman was not dead! But when I saw the number of the notes—I had them then about me—published, I almost wished that Jim had done it, and then the dead man would have told no tales. There I learnt that both men had been taken, that my name was as large as life, and my description fully given, in the *Hue and Cry*, with fifty pounds reward for my apprehension. Fancy, Ben, how I felt when I read this, which was stuck about Bristol, and, as I looked at it, saw a man who had been reading it also, look at me in the face. It was guilt that made me tremble, for I should not have known myself had I looked in a glass. I did not skulk about the town, but I had a room in a good inn; and having a convenient cold, I feared the cool air of the day, and the black wind of the night.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CONFESSION.

'I thought it no use to repine at my lot,
Or to bear with my perils a lone;
So I pack'd up the trifling remnants I'd got,
And a trifle, alas! was my store.

A handkerchief held all the treasure I had,
Which over my shoulder I threw;
Away men I trudged with a heart very bold,
To join with some jolly sailors crew.'

(Sings.)

'THE vessel which was to convey us to America contained Bob Matson, I was all a-suitors, and many passengers were already on board: he was called the *Hedge*. About eight days after my arrival at Bristol we sailed. If I could tell you the delight with which I saw my native soil grow round less to my sight, I would; but no words can convey half the raptures I felt when I was once again on the water—my passage paid for, my notes safe, my purse full. I had shipped as a runner, which, to try another country; and from my youthful experience I was regarded as one of the best on board. And to tell you the truth, Ben, during that I could not sleep, and was always afraid when any man looked me well in the face, and which I found made me strike my colour red once, and down went my eyes. I never could look a man full in the face, after that night, but that I was not the worst looking man on board.

'Amongst the passengers was a family of

the name of Richardson. The father had seen better days and brighter prospects: and although in those times the farmers in England were reaping a rich harvest, and becoming every day more and more affluent, yet somehow everything went wrong with him, until he made up his mind to try another country. He sold off everything he could, and he started with as many spades, rakes, ploughs, etc., as would have done to have cultivated the whole of the Bermudas. His family consisted of himself, his wife, and two daughters. Lucy was the oldest; she was about sixteen—but such a craft, Ben!—I'm not the man to do her justice, either in heart or form. She cried bitterly when we weighed anchor; and perhaps with the exception of the captain, for the wind was fair, I was the only man on board who smiled inwardly when the breeze caught the topsails, and I heard the first splash of the water as we began to forge ahead. Ay, she thought of all her best friends and relations, from whom she was parting for ever; she thought of the home of her youth, where she had been born and bred—and she seemed to look after a little strip of a tree which she brought on board, as a kind of a link in the long chain which was to reach from America to England. Far different were my thoughts. I left the land where the first object that would reach my eyes was the reward for my capture—the shore on which every man who stood was my enemy—the country which I had turned whiff when it turned against me. I hated the very name of an Englishman; and I thought that one day I might have my revenge by fighting against it. As the wind freshened, and the *Hedge* drew from the land, so in proportion rose my spirits and my security.

'No sooner had the ship cleared the Channel, than the roll of a cross sea began to work like physic on our passengers, and all hands, Richardsons and all, were on their beam ends. It had no effect upon me, excepting that I thought it prudent to sham a little; which, however, were off wonderfully when the skipper boy told me that dinner was ready; and I stooped below and fetched a knife and fork, and looked at a bit of beef with an eye not at all like that of a sick man.

'"Why, hullab, Master Williams," said the skipper, "confound you have never been on board a ship before, you get over the sickness rather quickly." "Why, no," said I, "clipping on a bit of the land and going." "Yes, I have, sure; I have felt very ill, but the farther we go the better I get." "But trouble you for another slice and another drink."

'"Well, I'm blessed if you're not one of the Lord's hard bargains, not hair and bone there; for I'm thinking all that crowd's

happier and more resigned to the new life on which I was about to enter. It's not the best time in the world to make love when a woman is sea-sick; but they remember attentions more in sickness than in health. I soon got into conversation with her, wheedled from her the determination of her father, wrapped her up close in her shawl, removed her fears as to danger, and by degrees got into a kind of friendly familiarity: she allowed me to tie her bonnet on better; and so, Ben, from one thing we got to another, until I had shaken hands with her, and recommended her to go down below, for the clouds had now risen a little, and some drops of rain began to fall.

"Come, lads," said the captain, who was a stout little fellow and understood the use of everything in his ship but a quadrant and Hamilton Moore, and who set the example of throwing a piece of wood overboard, and walking along the deck quickly, endeavouring to keep abreast of it, so as to judge how fast the ship was going, and in order to save his fingers from the wet log line, for it was preciously cold—"Come, my lads, away aloft to hand the fore-topsail." We were then under a close reefed main and fore-topsail and fore-sail, going about nine knots, and rolling about like a washing tub in a ripple. In those times, Ben, ships making a run of it had not many men, and a squall gave them plenty to do. "Away aloft, my lads, one or two of you; the rest clap on the fore-topsail clew-lines and bunt-lines." The sail nearly clewed up itself; for when they started the sheets, the wind lifted it, and it required no great exertion to get it as snug as the clew-lines and bunt lines could get it. The men now went aloft to furl the sails; but as the ship surged, it would every now and then blow over the yard; and I saw that if these fellows, who were not overhandy, did not mind what they were about, we should have one or two of them on deck without the use of the rigging, or perhaps a man overboard, in which case his chance of being saved was very little indeed. I was standing abaft; the captain was standing; the hands went aloft: one young fellow, the most active of the crew, set I led up to the top-mast head and came down on the yard arm by the lift, and there he stuck, hanging at the others. The captain ran for all hands of them to gather up the bunt net; but whether it was that the rest seemed anxious to lay out on the yard, or that they did not and could not the captain, or how to set about furling the sail in a gale, I don't know; but one of the crew, who had got on the quarter of the yard, before he could secure his hold, was caught by the sail as it bellied up over him, and he was overboard in a moment. Lucy, who with me had her eyes fixed on the seaman, perceived this. I

off coat, clapped the helm hard a-starboard, and broached the ship to, luckily without an accident: there was a large grating close at hand—I bundled it overboard, and only heard Lucy call out, "Gracious God!" before I was in as high a sea as need have swamped a boat.

"It was still light: I got hold of the grating, and shoved it before me right in the mark left by the wake of the ship, as long as it lasted; and then took my chance, until I saw the hat of the lad. I strove with all my might to reach it—I struck out with all my strength—I had no thought for myself—I never looked once at the ship to see if assistance was coming from her—I only exerted myself to save the man from a watery grave! I was now close to it—I urged the grating on—stretched my hand out, holding on by the other, for I knew what drowning men would do; and, Ben, as I'm living here this minute, the hat alone remained in my hand—there was not a hair of a man's head in it! I looked round me—I saw the boat coming towards me, but the object of my search was nowhere visible; I therefore clung to the grating; and long—ay, long did it appear before the boat reached me—so faint and fatigued did I feel. When I was lifted in, I was so dead done, that I lay in the stern sheets panting like a dog in a hot day.

"The first words that I heard uttered were, 'Mind how you come along in the boat.' I recovered instantly and looked up. There was that lumbering vessel, appearing as if every time she rolled to leeward she would roll into us, and when she surged to windward, she looked as if she had left us far from her, when down she came, the sea rushed from under her, and we were again distant. It was no time to act a part; the thing was to save one's own life. I caught hold of a rope, and with the activity of a seaman, and a man used to these occurrences, I waited the time when the ship rolled to leeward, and I was on deck the first. I saw Lucy abaft, and I saw the welcome she expressed; but these were no moments for women and love. I jumped into the main chains, and assisted to get the crew on board; and as we were preparing to veer her astern—for she was the stern boat—a sea came heavier than the rest, the boat was swamped, and the man with difficulty saved. The wreck of her cut about, we once more bore up and steered our course.

"Much obliged to you, sir," said the captain; "but the next time I'll tell you not to jump overboard after the men. I've lost my boat and my grating, and all because you followed the hat, which was blown away to leeward from the head. We roared out and pointed to you, but you would go your own way: it was a gallant

cheaper rate! What business has he now out of irons?"

"That's gratitude!" said I. "Good-night, captain; if you want a light hand aloft again, don't reckon upon me. I've saved your owners more than fifty pounds to-night, and you some hours' rest. I know what respect is due to the captain of a ship, or I should answer your other murmur in another style."

"A mutiny!" said he, collaring me, and leading me to the mainmast. "Here, Thompson, and you, Macintyre, seize this fellow's hands behind him, and lash him to the bits for a little. And here, boy," said he, calling for his youngster, "jump down in the cabin, and in the starboard locker abaft all, you'll find a pair of handcuffs. And now you are my prisoner, and shall remain so snug enough."

"I need not tell you that I was a favourite with the crew, and that even they hesitated; but the captain was a thick-set, sturdy fellow, and, stout as I was, I felt like a flea in his grip. One of the men, Thompson I believe, talked about such usage to a gentleman passenger; and then, and not till then, was it that the whole tide set against me. "Gentleman indeed!" said the captain. "Do gentlemen mark their arms this way?" and he tore my shirt and showed the cursed proof of what I was. "Why this," he continued, "is the man for whom the reward was offered—he is the man who committed the murder!"

"I never did it!" said I. "never! I wanted to stop them after the robbery!"

"My eyes!" said Macintyre; and in a moment I felt his hands holding me the faster.

"Bar a hand, boy!" said the captain.

"I can't find them, sir," said he.

"Hold him fast, Thompson, whilst I slap below for them."

"Ay, ay, sir," said I.

"Is it that you repay me for what I have done?"

"I can't find them, sir," said he.

"Then my eyesight upon you, you magnificent villain, and may hell take you for your ingratitude!" At that moment the captain came up with the fasteners. I had but one chance of escape. To the rail with you all," said I, and made a dash.

"I had no choice; my safety was in an accident. Then, that accident happened, and whilst the captain was raging on Thompson and the crew, and whilst I, as far as in me lay, deterred my self. The ship was lifted up a huge sea, and I tumbled heavily forward. "Thank God," said a man forward, "we are out of the racket!" And scarcely had he said so, when a tremendous

behind us, broke just astern, and the surf flew over the stern. This shook the determination of the captain. He rounded the ship to, and as she came flying to the wind, the sails were taken aback, a heavy sea struck her on the chess-tree, and the foremast, giving a tremendous crash, fell over the starboard side.

"Who is the prisoner now?" said I.

"No sooner had the ship become aback, than she lost her way through the water, became perfectly unmanageable, and as the succeeding roller came along, the main-topmast fell, the bowsprit snapped.—Ay, Ben, you may have seen some sights, and I have heard of that business in South America, where the birds walked about amongst the living, having just returned from eating their companions; but you have never seen thirty or forty affrighted women rush almost naked from their beds, gaining the slippery deck, to see ruin aloft, and inevitable shipwreck to leeward. You have never heard the scream of women in such moments: they gave one loud shriek, which, whilst it afforded some consolation—for women always seem pleased when they make themselves heard—frightened the crew. All chance of escape from anything like order was gone in a moment: the captain knew not what he was about; and I, who had seen some few dangerous surfs, and who had been accustomed, from the life I had led, not to be frightened before I was hurt—even I lost all presence of mind, and ran in among the women, who had got about the mainmast, all huddled together, and looking like a flock of sheep when a strange dog comes barking near them.

"I saw old Richardson in the arms of his daughter; the poor old fellow had been very ill, and had latterly fretted him self very much about his health, thinking he was not enough fit to start abroad in America. He was now old, his knees frightened as like a child, and I, holding his hand up, was praying for myself.

"He seemed not to feel his daughter, for all I heard him say was 'Save me!—save me!' It was but a poor time for consolation, but I did all I could; I told him that I would die by her side, and that my best exertions should be made for her and her sister.

"Then, as I had understood each other before this business occurred, I had made for myself how much I loved her, and now, with the danger of shipwreck before us, we grew closer to each other. I held her round the waist with the right hand, and with the left I held on to a ring-bolt in the latibord bulwark, and kept as close under the gunwale. The old father I had placed behind me, and he was clinging to a ring-bolt with both hands with a fearful grip; his words were all in my ear, and

up, was without his coat and waistcoat, and had covered his pantaloons with an apron;—he looked the butcher. The youngsters on the lower deck, when they saw this preparation to bleed them, pelted the doctor with wads until he made a hasty retreat to his place of security.

I was on the poop, amongst the bunting and Captain Adair's marines. There they were, two deep as they call it, taking it as coolly as most people would when they piped to dinner.

Nelson, after having finished his last yarn upon paper, walked round the decks to see that all was right and ready: he spoke to many of the men, and he encouraged all. It makes a seaman's heart jump when he sees his admiral looking after everything himself. He was pleased with the looks of his men; and when he came on the quarter-deck he was received with three good cheers, and he bowed his head to his crew, who were proud enough of their commander. We all knew him well enough; and it was no easy matter to persuade him to let the *Temeraire* pass the *Victory*, in order to take off a little of the attention with which the Frenchmen were sure to honour us. He made the signal for 'the *Temeraire* to pass ahead'; but he took good care to carry on every stretch he could cram upon the *Victory*; so that it was no easy matter to obey the order, for the sailing of both ships was nearly equal. The *Temeraire* ranged up on our quarter and took the wind out of our sails, and then got abeam and would have passed us, when Nelson, unable to bear the idea that anyone should be exposed to guard him, and forgetting for a moment his previous signal, called out, speaking, as he always did, a little through his nose, 'Captain Hervey, I request you to keep in your proper station, which is *aboard the Victory!*'

We now heard the first shot fired; it was at noon precisely, for the master took the sun just as if we were going a long run, and that the navigation was in the wind's eye. 'The *Minares* and the *Engage* opened at the same moment upon the *Rouge-Sarcelle*; and she was steering down right in amongst the enemy's sterns as if she were going into Port-mout's Harbour. The fire attracted the attention of the admiral, who called out, loud enough for us all to hear him, 'See how that gallant fellow Collingwood takes his ship into action! See never yawed a bit, and for ten minutes she never took the least notice of the enemy; then, by way of making a little smoke, she fired one or two shots, continuing her steady course until two or three minutes after twelve, when she broke through the line of the enemy's fleet, just opposite to the *Sainte Anne*, a Spanish three-decker, giving her such a salute in her stern-chimney, that the

admiral would have caught cold if he slept in the after-cabin and the ship was before the wind. He then luffed up close alongside, and engaged her to leeward. He was not left unsupported; for the *Mars*, *Pelleisle*, and *Tonnant* were close in the *Sovereign's* wake; and they soon relieved their gallant admiral from the heavy fire into which he had steered. Never was there a more gallant action—a more noble sight. The guns roared; and so fast and heavy was the firing, that it sounded like one continued roll.

We all kept our eyes fixed upon the lee-line, until we found out that we were within range, and the enemy had begun measuring distances with us. They fired single shots from two of the nearest ships, until they saw that their shots came well over us, when they opened their broadsides and blazed away as fast as they could. They fired high, as if wishing to riddle us aloft, and thus keep us the longer from coming into close action. They knew we were Nelson's ship; not because we steered gallantly in amongst them, for Collingwood did the same; but because they saw that we made all the signals, and that we had half-a-dozen flags aloft. It was as plain as a pike-staff that we were the admiral's ship; and any man who knew a cocked-hat from a ring-bolt would have known the *Victory*.

Nelson remained below writing until the first shot struck the *Victory*. When he came on deck, he observed that the jack-yard of the lower studding-sail was tripped up to clear the tack, for the order was given that no sail was to be taken in for fear of lumbering the decks; but the studding-sail balyards and tacks were to be cut away, and the sails let overboard. 'Hulloa!' said Nelson, 'what's all this? Hand that tack out directly, or these d—d Frenchmen will think we are shortening sail because they've hit us!'

We could not make out which was the admiral's ship, for they wore no colours or flags; but we knew which was the largest ship, and that was quite enough for Nelson. But it struck us all as odd, that we were going into action with a large fleet without being able to make out the commander-in-chief's flag. That was not like Nelson, who kept as many flags aloft as a ship dressed in colours. We were quite certain they were not English; and as the whole world were upon our shoulders then, we could not go far wrong in firing into them. It was odd that the French were not quite sure the Spanish would stand the hammering they were sure of getting; and the Spanish admiral, who, like all Spaniards, was proud and brave, did not think that the friendly fire of the French was worth much; and this accounts, as far as anyone can understand the order of their line of battle, for both nations being mixed together.

We had now got down pretty close to the enemy, and began to think of returning them some of the hard-headed messengers they had sent us so plentifully. Our main-topmast and all the studding-sail booms had been shot away: we were like a winged bird, with our feathers hanging about us, and falling off one by one. We had lost nearly fifty men, but had not fired a shot. Our turn, however, had now come; and the men fore and aft the deck, who had kept a strict silence, began to talk to one another. The side-tackles of the guns were looked to, and the matches were blown—for at that time, although we had them—were seldom used our locks, to make fighting easy and death more sure.

We were steering for the largest ship of the enemy's line, the *Santissima Trinidad*. We knew her from her four tier of ports; for she was the only ship ever built that carried such a number of guns, and she looked as if three ships had been knocked into one. The ships ahead and astern of her were so close, that we could not have broken the line without running one or the other on board; and this proves that Villeneuve had well calculated his advantage. If there had been a good breeze of wind, I don't think he would have offered battle; but he knew how long it would take for us to get into action—close action, such as Nelson liked; and under what great disadvantages we laboured, in being exposed for a quarter of an hour to such a hot raking fire as half-a-dozen line-of-battle ships could pour into us before we could open our broadsides upon them. Now we were close on board of them.

To have continued our course, and endeavoured to pass astern of the big ship, as we called her, we must have got entangled in the enemy's line. Nelson, seeing this, called the *Santissima Trinidad* in passing, a good example which the *Temeraire* followed; and then came the *Agincourt*, who did the same and pushed her; the crash of the three broadsides was tremendous! Nelson then told Hardy to take his choice of any of them, and ordered him to be put head-to-stern, and the *Edinburgh* followed the *Redoubtable*. She would not do it, as it was a worse position than the *Temeraire*, who pointed into us a broadside of twelve, sixteen, round-shot, long-grain; and every body could have imagined the grating of cannon-balls and boarding-pikes. I think only a good deal of blood would have made us a present of them, and that it put me in mind of the French, when they make a point: they pay so much for a long staff as they can take with them, and then charge directly that takes place, even so the fleet, and all walks the same, and can only drink. It was with the ships, the first one on every broadside, and that broke many a

bubble; then she knew she was not to try that trick again, so she let down her lower-deck ports, and never fired another gun from that deck during the action.

On the larboard side of us we had the *Santissima Trinidad* and the *Bucentaure*. But O'Riley, who was captain of one of the quarter-deck guns, roared out, 'Och me! and I'm a Catholic too! does any man think I'll fire into the *Holy Trinity*?—not I. But small blame to the others if they don't catch O'Riley's blessing!' and he blazed away at the *Bucentaure*; when away went our mizen-mast about eight or ten feet above the poop-deck: it was 'Stand from under, signal-man,' and I gave a jump clear of the wreck, and was all clear and above board. In the meantime the *Temeraire* had fixed herself upon the broadside of the *Redoubtable*; a Spaniard fell on board of the *Temeraire*; and the four ships were all in a line, as if we were going to try the battle of St. Vincent over again. Well, there's only one way of describing an action where the ships are placed broadside to broadside, and when it is give and take, just as hard as both parties can give and take. One immense cloud of smoke almost suffocated us, and for some time it was impossible to make out what the other ships were about. The noise of the guns, the 'Blaze away, boys!' the singing out for powder, and the snarl for the match, only came between the shots, which flew about like hail-stones in a gale of wind.

We soon found out that the great guns were the smallest part of the annoyance; for every now and then whizz came a small whistle of a musket-shot, and down went a man to a certainty. This amusement to our enemies and death to us, we soon found came from the different tops of the French and Spanish ships. At this part of the play was not what we chiefly bargained for, our marine, who were getting tired from this hidden fire, thought they might as well return the compliment, and they prepared to make themselves top-men for the occasion. Captain Ashur, who was as gallant an officer as the marines ever had amongst them, (and that's saying a great deal for any man,) or in that force are to be found so many brave and excellent soldiers in any regiment or army in the whole world. Whenever a danger was to be faced, there you saw a marine; and whenever any cutting out took place, you would find one or two volunteers from that noble corps, either sitting in the stern-sheet or peeping over the bows of the boats. Ashur was killed then shot. It is not every man who wears a blue jacket and buff trousers who can carry a musket to the main-top once in his day, even with the enemy's flag on any side of you.

the poop in an instant; I seized a musket, and I watched the mizen-top of the *Redoubtable*, from which the fatal shot had been fired. There were still two Frenchmen left aloft—the rest had been killed—and one of those had killed the admiral. Mr. Pollard and Mr. Collingwood, two gallant young midshipmen, were the only two left alive on the poop of the *Victory*: now I again joined them. I supplied them with cartridges, and loaded my own gun. I saw the man, for we knew him by his glazed hat and white frock-jacket. ‘Be ready,’ said Pollard: ‘he will come within sight directly; he has loaded his musket.’—‘That’s he! that’s he!’ we all said at the same moment, and we fired instantly. His gun was discharged at the same time—he fell dead, and I lost my arm! I was desired to go below; and I did not stand two calls—my worst enemy was dead, my best friend was dying. Smarting from the wound, I was going down the poop-ladder, when a small splinter struck my eye, and caused the most insufferable pain for a short time. Bleeding and almost fainting, I came below. A tourniquet was instantly applied, and some water given me. I was in the act of drinking it, when one of the men said, ‘Brace, the admiral is near his end.’ I soon staggered to the midshipmen’s berth.

Although the space was kept as clear as possible in order to give Nelson all the air which could reach him, room was made for me. Every one knew that I had stood by him from the first hour he became a sailor until this last sad moment: besides which, he had inquired for me.

‘Who is that?’ said the admiral, as he heard the noise in making room for me.

‘Brace, my lord,’ I replied.

‘Not wounded, I hope?’

‘I have lost an eye and an arm, my lord,’ said I, ‘and shall better resemble for the future my glorious commander!’

‘Brace, come nearer’ (his voice was getting very weak and indistinct): ‘place your arm close to my mouth; listen.’ He then whispered, ‘She is provided for; she can do all she wishes to do; and I order the *Albatross* to convey her to the hospital to me for a landy case, as you call it.’ ‘Hardy,’ (the captain said to me), ‘I have the oldest follow in the world, and I wish to save his Majesty’s service; I have no place here in Greenwich.’ Whilst he was saying this, I laid taken his hand; and I kissed and held it the time which dropped upon it.

‘The doctor,’ he said, ‘When you get to England, send a large flag to Mr. Barton; tell him of my wound, and tell him I have left a number of letters for him; tell him, that even now, when I am so far away, I thought of him, and I am so sorry you are here; tell him, send him as much of

a loud cheer from the crew of the *Victory* startled him. We had passed the *Royal Sovereign*, and we gave them that cheer which every one felt was a signal of victory, and that no great loss had overtaken us. The *Royal Sovereign* returned it, Collingwood’s hat waving above the rest.

‘What is that, Hardy?’ he said; but Hardy was on deck: he returned about a minute afterwards, when Nelson repeated the question.

‘It was the men cheering for the tenth ship of the enemy’s line which has struck, and as they passed the *Royal Sovereign*.

‘None of ours have struck, I hope, Hardy?’

‘There’s no fear of that, my lord,’ replied the captain.

‘Then I am more easy,’ the admiral continued. ‘Hardy, I am a dead man: I am going fast—it will be all over with me soon.’

In the meantime, whilst this overwhelming event was taking place, the battle had been nobly fought along the whole line. After Collingwood had raked the *Santa Anna* and ranged up alongside of her, he was nobly seconded by the *Mars*, commanded by Worthy Duff, as he was called—and he merited the name. His poor fellow! after fighting like a good officer, was nearly cut in half by a round shot, and England lost another hero. The *Sovereign*, after her first flourish with the *Santa Anna*, full sail of every ship, Spanish or French, within reach of her guns; whilst the *Bellerophon*, after breaking the line, got aboard of the *Alge*, an eighty-gun ship. The foreyard of the *Bellerophon* caught the mainyard of the Frenchman, and a heavy fire was immediately directed upon her from the starboard bow: the harbour bow guns were blazing away into the *Monarca*; at the same time she was receiving and returning, without much time being lost, the fire of the *Diana*, a Spanish eighty-gun ship, which had drifted on the *Bellerophon*’s larboard quarter, whilst she, as I repeat her name was lying to. *St. Jean Neuf*, another gallant but instant and French eighty-gun ship, the *St. Jean* touched her up on the starboard quarter.

The *Bellerophon*’s men never thought of the sailing against them; they fought like lions; and the more they gave and took, the stronger they rise.

Several hundred grenades were thrown into the crowded decks of the *Bellerophon*; and could I have been amongst the number, I had not been a hero; they might have killed me, and the sails to which we were lying to, and the mizen topmast for the fore and main; whilst the sails, the masts, the rigging, the tops of our sails, could be seen flying in the air, and the masts and rigging were so shattered that Collingwood’s

one groaning near me; and there, sure enough, was Bob Matson. He had been wounded by a piece of iron in the side; and though he lingered long enough to give the last cheer, as the last flag came down and the firing ceased, yet he never saw the sun set: before that time he was overboard. Poor fellow! his last word was 'Fanny!' Well, he had his heart in the right place!—Bob was not the only one who had a hint. Smith, a midshipman, wrote a letter to his parents to 'beg' them to bear his loss with resignation, for that he *was to die* in the great action: he was right—a shot *unmanned* him; he loosened the tourniquet after drinking a glass of water, and died. He was a brave and a good young gentleman.

In the glorious action of Trafalgar, out of the twenty for which our brave commander had bargained, we got nineteen, either taken, sunk, burnt, or wrecked; four which escaped us were taken by Sir Richard Strachan; and I suppose there never was nor ever will be again such a noise on the Atlantic.

It was not long after this fight before we were all in England again. We had placed the body of Nelson in spirits, in order to convey it safely to England; and we heard some reports about tipping the admiral. If it was done, it was of course on account of the bravery of Nelson that the seamen required some of his spirit. This is true, that owing to the cask in which Nelson was placed being badly headed up, when fermentation took place, the head flew out, and upjumped the admiral. The sentinel left his post without being relieved. It was the intention of Collingwood to send the body home in the *Europe*; but even I, wounded as I was, turned out to join the ship's company in humbly begging that, as the admiral fought with us and fell on our own deck, we might send that which was left of him safely in England.

We went to Gibraltar; and on the 9th of November we sailed in company with the *Bellona*, for the body never being removed from the pipe or spirits into which we had packed it until the arrival of the *Porter* at Spithead. We had a long and a bad passage, for we did not leave Portmouth until the end of December. Then every flag and painted banner, and many hundreds crowded upon the platform to see the ship which had Nelson's body on board. Although many cursed the wind which so obtrusively hindered our reaching England before, yet I blessed it; for the delay which it caused gave time for my recovery.

It was on the 21st of October that I was wounded, and that night of November I was again in hospital, and in the end of the month I was quite well, and had been so for

who squints and looks at both lines at once, but I was still the man that put my foot afloat with Nelson, and who had stuck by him until his death. I had yet to see him buried. Why, when a messmate is knocked off the hooks, or loses the number of his mess from sickness or accident, who stand by the grating at the gangway when the flag is placed over him before he is launched, and who launch him, but those who have eaten, drunk, and lived with him? Well, then, should an admiral like Lord Nelson be left to strangers? No; I saw it all: and although I am a man, yet I never thought the worse of myself for feeling like a man; and when I saw the coffin for the last time, if I had had both my flippers, I couldn't have swabbed up the tears, which went rushing out of my eyes like an ebb-tide at London bridge.

When we got off Ushant,—that is, the *Victory*, *Bellerophon*, and *Bellerophon*,—we fell in with Admiral Cornwallis and the Channel fleet. We telegraphed that we had the Admiral's body on board, and the flag was shown half-mast. Cornwallis passed under our stern; and never do I remember to have seen a more affecting sight than on that day. Willing to give us the welcome we deserved, and yet anxious to show their great respect for the death of Nelson, the ship's company gave us three dumb cheers; they waved their hats as a compliment to us, whilst they checked their voices in compliment to the dead. As the ship passed silently under our stern, the Dead March in 'Saul' was played by the band, and our comrades glided away from us silently and slowly, without a word and without a cheer.

The *Victory*, hardly seaworthy now, for she had received eighty shots between wind and water, and her spars were wounded—was ordered to Sheerness to be paid off, and we arrived on the 17th of December. There it was that I saw the very coffin which Captain Hardy had given the Navy, and given to Nelson, brought on board; and the last service I ever performed for him who had when alive been a constant friend to me and mine, was to dress the body before it was placed in the coffin. Yes, I placed the first of his shoes on his feet; I put on the white stockings, his hose, and his red coat, and his buff breeches; and I put the red coat and buff breeches round the body in the coffin. The body was then sent to Greenwich; and I was allowed, before the departure of Captain Hardy and Mr. Maitland, to go on board the yacht. On the 21st of November, I having the flag of the *Victory* on my staff, I was carried by eight oars to the *Europe* (I was once) and placed in the *Europe* hall.

They have placed a monument on the deck of the *Europe* where Nelson was when he

not decided? Here, dry your tears. I can bear it all now; tell me what he said.'

There was something so hurried in her manner—something so wild in her eyes, which now were dry and burning, that I was alarmed; and that alarm made me myself again. I began,

'When he was wounded, my lady——'

'Yes! yes!' she interrupted; 'never mind that form,—go on.'

'He sent for me,' I continued; 'he knew it was all over with him in this world, and so he told the doctor.'

'Well, go on,—what do you stop for? go on.'

'Well, my lady, he told me to put my ear close to his mouth, and then he whispered,

"When you get home go to Merton,—see *her*—tell her I have left a memorial in her behalf——"

'I care not,' she said, in a tone of voice which startled me, 'about memorials! Tell me what he *said* about me.'

'It's all about you, ma'am,' I continued, —and here I looked round the room for Jane.

'You shall see little Jane directly if you will but continue.'

"'Tell her,'" I continued, 'the admiral said,—"Tell her that even now, when all is shortly to pass away, I thought of her—that my last prayer was for her;—tell her——"'

I had nothing more to say; she had thrown herself upon her knees, and lifting her eyes aloft, and holding her hands closed together, she seemed to be offering up a prayer.

At this moment the door opened, and little Jane, dressed in black, came bounding into the room. She stopped in an instant, as if suddenly struck with fear; for she saw her whom she considered as her mother on her knees, and her face showing dreadfully white from the darkness of her dress.

The child did not know me; for when I saw *her* throw herself upon her knees, I bowed my head down low and kept my hand over my face. 'Oh! mamma, mamma!' the little innocent thing said, and threw herself on the neck of her and burst out crying.

'It's Brace,' she said.

The child instantly left her and ran to me.

When I held up my hand, she wound her little arms round me, and kissed me again and again; but when she saw that one arm was gone and one eye closed, she cried out in distress, 'Oh! who has done this—who has done this!'

Well, there we were; and though I had seen some scenes in my time, and had been in the cockpit when arms and legs were not worth belonging to their owners, yet I never felt as I did then. *She* remained for some time kneeling, and I was afraid to stir or to speak: at last she rose, kissed the picture over and over again, and left the room.

When she was gone, I felt as if a load was taken off my breast, and I could breathe again. I caught Jane in my arm, and placing her on my knee, looked at her full in the face, and said, 'My little cherub, you shall never want a father!'

Jane was much improved in appearance, and the black—which I suppose she wore for her father, but of whom I never spoke—made her look prettier than before. She sat upon my knee looking me full in the face without saying a word, although tears came running out of her eyes; and when I said, 'Cheer up, my little angel! what do you cry for?' she never said a word, but taking hold of the sleeve of my jacket, she shook it, and then burst out a-crying.

'Oh, is that all, my little darling?' said I: 'don't mind that; I have had my revenge for it. The Frenchman who knocked it off won't come to shake hands with me; and I'll make him a present of my eye—a dead eye will serve his turn now.'

The little creature soon cheered up, and we forgot all about legs and arms, and eyes, and got talking of what she was about, and how *she* bore the account when it first reached her, and so on; when in the lady came again. Now she was quite herself; she came to the chair upon which she had been seated before, and looking me full in the face, she said, 'Now you will not see any more of this woman's weakness. It's hard—very hard to part with those we love—for whom we have sacrificed our own and the world's esteem, and such a one as he was; but it is done,—he is dead and buried, and we must strive to surmount what we cannot control. Now, tell me slowly again the very words—mind, I remember what you told me before—tell me the very words.'

I repeated the same words again; for after the action, when my arm was off, and I in my hammock, one of the midshipmen, for whom I had long had a particular respect, and who was young Pollard, the one who stood on the poop to be shot at like a chicken tied to a stake, came to see me. After asking how I felt, and whether it was great pain losing the bone, and such like question, that came home to my notions he said he would do anything he could for me now and always. 'Well,' said I, 'I believe you, because I have never known a real brave fellow either a hypocrite or a liar; and the only favour I have to ask of you now is to get a pen and ink, and a piece of paper, and write down what I am going to tell you.'

He thought I had been a little out about fitting foreign, and that the conversation was like grazing the ways before the dry bones are stripped off. He looked me in the face, and said with much kindness, 'No, no, Brace, no fear of that now, at my rate; for before I came to see you I

which became the study of the painter: she was like Mount Etna—all quiet and cold without, all fire and heat within. She humbled him who had humbled thousands; she conquered him whom the whole world could not conquer; she occasioned the only spot upon the character, public or private (for the execution of that prince was her work), of the greatest admiral England or the world ever saw. Then, when I shook all these contradictions together, making a kind of punch of the mixture, came to the same conclusion as the Irish man in the after-guard who was employed in winding a hawser up the after-hatchway. 'That no doubt the rope was strong enough to hang a thousand men, but that he was very glad to have seen the end of it.' So was I: I never hoped or wished to see her gain. She was powerful enough to have ruined a thousand men; and all I can say for Nelson is, that had he withstood her charms, he must have been something more than a man, or something less than one.

I was discharged from the *Victory*; and that was the last ship I ever put my foot on board of. I visited her frequently afterwards, but I never went on board any other ship. I had now nothing to do but to look out for myself and my wife, and leave Jane under the care of *her*, and let her take any slant of wind which might lead to a comfortable anchorage for life: I therefore steered away to Rochester, and had the satisfaction of finding a warm heart and a warm cottage ready to receive me.

For the first week we talked of nothing but Nelson and the action; and if I had been given to liquor, I never need have paid for the value of a pint of beer. All England was alive to the consequences of this noble victory: the sea was clear, and it was imagined a peace would soon follow. Many and many's the time that I have been stopped and que-rioned about the admiral; and my poor wife began to think, from the kindness I received, that I might one day be First Lord of the Admiralty, or Governor of Greenwich.

Put I see that the intention was to get the money. That's why he made the tape.

clothed; and although Susan cut and contrived, and I never threw away a piece of tobacco, yet we saw just as clearly as we saw the church, that my coming in amongst the squadron would occasion a greater expense: the prize-money for Trafalgar was yet to be paid, and *she* on whom I was to rely had been left as a legacy to the country, and had little enough for herself.

I therefore saw it was of no use eating the bread of idleness, and I could not turn my hand to anything; so I got a gentleman, who behaved kindly to me, to write to Captain Hardy about Greenwich. I did not ask in vain: about a week afterwards I received a letter, desiring me to present myself at the Hospital for inspection; and a fortnight from the receipt of the letter, there was the *Ben Brace*, moored for life in the snug harbour for worn-out shipping. No longer did I wear a straw hat with a broad ribbon and *Victory* upon it; my large trousers, round jacket, and long-quartered shoes were laid up in ordinary; and I saw myself in a gold-lace scraper, a large blue coat, big enough for a smuggling Jew, and I kept it close buttoned for the first week rather than show my slender shanks; then came a pair of buckles, to finish off; but I held on my tail; and although they clapped me into dock to repair my hull, and rigged me afresh from stem to stern, yet I wouldn't allow the barber to cut off the tow-rope of my head,* and I had it parcelled up and stowed away under my collar.

I told Susan to weigh her anchor from Rochester and to rendezvous at Greenwich, and I got a decent cottage outside of the gates. When she was safely in port, I began to look about me, and to think of all I had gone through until this time. I, who had sailed the sea and roved over barrens—who had roamed about the world like a child in a cradle—who had been tossed about like seaweed, at last had taken fast hold of the

never been unhappy for an hour since I came within the gates.

Our lives went on steadily enough, and we often at the end of the year sat down and wondered how we had got through three hundred and sixty-five days; and yet years and years crept away until the latter end of 1816, without anything happening to change my thoughts. I was growing older and older, and yet I was a stout able-bodied man, and at a pinch might have gone afloat again. Once or twice at the beginning of my being a pensioner, Jane had come down to see me; she always brought a little money, but she stayed a very short time. As she grew up to be a woman, she became less frequent in her visits, until at last, I suppose, she got ashamed of being seen walking with an old man in knee-breeches; and after 1814, when she was about sixteen years of age, and as beautiful as ever a woman could be, she forgot poor old Ben Brace—at least I thought so—and for years she never came again.

I had been rather ill about this time, and as my wife was admitted as one of the nurses, every care was taken of me. At the close of 1816 I was out again, having undergone a thorough repair, and being ready to ride out any gale. I was walking about, wondering of what use I was, when I saw an economical pensioner stumping along: he had lost both legs, and therefore had no occasion for the blue stockings; he had shipped on the regulation-pins, and looked for all the world like a barrel of beer upon stumps. Well, when I saw that he was not used to his new timbers, but that he laboured heavily, and every now and then, when a squall took his three-cornered scraper and nearly lifted it off his noddle, in putting up his hand to save it, his balance was not quite sure, but he pitched about like a Billygoat before he got steady again, I made sail to lend him a hand; but it was dangerous to come alongside of him, for his arms were flying about like the telegraph on the top of the Hospital.

When I got within hail, I offered him assistance, seeing that he had been so riddled about the hull that he was scarcely seaworthy; and he ran me down.

'I shall never weather the corner, messmate, unless you take me in tow; for I find it precious difficult to keep upon an even keel with these movable shores; and although I have got these two sticks, like shrouds to a wounded mast, yet I always feel as if I was going by the board; if I get upon my beam-ends, I shall never right again!'

'Why, shipmate,' said I, 'you have not practised long upon this tack, I should think, and you look pretty weak in the bends; I take it that a man does not lose both his pins without being on his beam-

ends for some time.' I looked at the poor fellow's face as I made this remark, but it was so thin and wizened that it might have done for a lantern and not hid much of the light. His cocked-hat, placed athwartships, did not come enough over his head, and I never remember to have seen such a wee-begone phiz since I was a pensioner. He stopped every now and then, and at last I brought him to an anchor on one of the benches just in time to save him from fainting.

'I shall get used to these timbers in time, I suppose; but it is hard work for the knees: I never used to trouble them much before, and now they don't like the work;—it makes me feel sea-sick again.'

'Ay,' said I, 'it will all come right in time: when we are young, it requires lots of practice before we can toddle upon the legs we are born with; and when we get old, we never learn so quickly as when we were young. But tell us, shipmate, where did you lose them?'

'At Algiers,' he replied; 'and the devil take all Turks who ever smoked pipes and wore turbans! I should not have minded one, and then to have got Greenwich; but to slap them both off with one shot was sharp work—and for me, too, who have been in so many actions and escaped. It is, as you say, rather hard to learn even patience when one's old. I never could wait without kicking my heels at the grog-tub when first I went to sea, and I was one of the worst hands on board to stand doing nothing at quarters when the ship was in a blaze and only the firemen at work.'

'What ward are you in?' I asked.

'The *Victory*,' said he; 'but I'm hardly clear of the sick-list yet; and in this squally weather, with the wind veering about like a dog-vane in a calm, with rain one moment and a glimpse of the sun the next, I feel my feet itching and aching just as plainly as if they were on.'

'What actions were you in, messmate, besides this one against the stone walls?—and a good one it was!'

'What actions! I'm blessed if I must not look up my memory and shake my noddle before I shall remember them all. Why, I was in the *Surveillante*, and was blown up—that was an action I never wished to try again, for, if I had lost my legs then, I should have been drowned. Well, then, I was in St. Vincent's.'

'What ship?' said I quickly; 'what ship, mes mate?'

'Why, I was in the *Agamemnon* with Nelson.'

'In the *Agamemnon* with Nelson?—I don't remember you.'

'Nor I you in that three-cornered Portuguese man-of-war-looking skull-thatcher,' said he; 'but just take the top off your mast-head, and if you've a feature left in

don't see half as much as you used to see : but I'll tell you. After the *Sovereign* was paid off, I took a cruise to London myself, and all the money I got from Moses' allowance for the Trifolgar prize-money, and my pay at the back of it, soon got into other pockets. I first of all went to Portsmouth to see if I could find my wife, and I steered away to the Jolly Sailors. The old landlord was at home, and I sat down and blew a cloud with him. "Well," said I, "old boy, have you seen my wife?"

"Your wife!" said he; "why, to be sure I did; I saw her after she married the lobster. They started off for Ireland, where his regiment was quartered, and neither of them have been back since. To be sure, it's not more than a month ago altogether, and I don't well see, if they got across the water, how they could have been back."

"In course," says I, "she was married under a purser's name?"

"Not she," said the landlord. "Her name was Elizabeth Susan Matson; she married you as Betsy Matson, and she married the soldier as Susan Matson. The clerk swore he knew her again, although she had changed her colours, for this time she wore red ribbons; she answered that she was Betsy's twin-sister, and as much like as two peas. This silenced the clerk, and they were married."

"This settled all I had to know; and although I did still love Betsy, yet, I could not forgive her exactly, so I got drunk and forgot her. The next day I slipped myself on board a stage-coach, and back I went to Tower Hill. It was not long before I had been hauled up before the mayor, locked up in the lock-house, run aboard of by land pirates, and cleaned out with store-room brushed and not a shot in the locker; I had, therefore, nothing for it but to volunteer again; and before a fortnight was over my head, I was a quartermaster on board the *Arethusa*, commanded by Captain Charles Brisbane, as gallant an officer as ever led his ship into an enemy's harbour or caught hold of a Frenchman at sea. We were off to the West Indies; and although, Ben, I had been burnt there once before, I'm blessed if I don't think it a little hotter and hotter, until one of these days I expect to hear that Jamaica is all in a blaze, and the black fellows burning like tallow-candles.

"As far as Yellow Jeck was concerned, we got off pretty well; he took his proportion, for better or as deep; and when we got ashore at Port Charles on the waiting-party, some of us were absent a week afterwards much longer under the water than ever we expected. Well, that yellow fever is the devil himself!

"We had not long been there, I mean in Jamaica (I'll just run my log up, I'll be bound)

fore we get back to our cabins)—when we were joined by the *Latona* and *Anson*, and put to sea in company with them. We were beating up towards the island of Curacoa, when we fell in with the *Fisgard*, and she hauled her wind and joined the squadron.

"Towards the close of the year—and we had made a merry Christmas of it—we began fore and aft the decks to think something was in the wind. Although we were always kept pretty sharp at our work, yet now we fancied that we were practised at quarters more than at reefing topsails; and whenever the captains of the other ships came on board they always got talking together more earnestly; and then it would be "Quarters again"—then "Carry all sail"—then it would be "Quarter-master the glass;" and after a good look, "Tack ship, stand off under all sail," then "Heave-to;" "Captains come on board to supper;" lots of talking again. And although it was Christmas time, it was as sure as that sugar grows in Jamaica that we should get something more than sugar-plums to eat before a week was over our heads.

"Well, Ben, the last day of the old year we had got off Curacoa, and we got talking over old times, when the usual beat to quarters took place, men were mustered, the "All sober and present" reported—for I stood at the wheel and saw and heard it all—when, instead of saying as we expected, "Beat the retreat, and let the men make merry to-night," or "Splice the main brace," or any such good news, the captain called out, "Clear for action, and let the carpenters see the fire-screens in order. Send the gunner here." Old Pounce came along the deck thinking something was wrong; but the captain asked him how much powder he had filled, spoke about going to the magazine, and so on; and when everything was ready, he went round the decks himself, and says he, "My men, you will have pretty tight work of it before this time to-morrow." Then came the retreat, leaving the ship clear for action, and the guns secured by the tackles alone. "Bury the hammocks down," said the captain, "and don't disturb the men during the night more than is absolutely requisite." It was then very light breezes and fine weather; the land, just as the sun went down, was reported from the mast-head, and the squadron were seen standing to wind-ward.

"Well, the devil an enemy did we see; and we couldn't make out west we were going to fight; for there was nothing but the land, the water, and the sky in sight; and we had never heard of any ship but one or two Dutch ships in Curacoa, and they were not very likely to start. But the captain soon cleared up our doubts; to

bettors, Tom, you don't see more with your two top-lights than I do with my one. However, I should have no objection to turn in anything else but another *dead-eye*. Although you have no regular service legs, yet, for a pair of dock-yard pins, they are as good as any carpenter's yeoman could rummage from the store-room: and as *good*, the parson says, comes out of evil, so you never need cut your corns or buy any blacking to polish your shoes.'

'That's what I call *fortune de guerre*, as the Frenchman used to say,' replied Tom, 'when he made a mistake, and, instead of getting into Brest or Toulon, used to be out of his reckoning, and by some devilish bad fortune find himself snugly housed not a score of miles from Portsmouth. But come along, Ben Brace, my old Polyphenus; and, as you will have your blind eye to windward, I'll keep to leeward of you, or you'll make so much lee-way you'll never fetch the port. There, starboard you may a bit, and we shall get out of harbour here without running foul of the gates.'

'Much obliged for the pilotage, Tom,' I replied; 'but as I sail better than you, I'll take you in tow; and, if it was not personal, I should say, seeing that I remark all things, that you would be like a small craft astern of a vessel which had lost its rudder: you would have to look out and steer her, whilst she towed you along. There, I'm smack in the gutter; that all comes without being personal like, of your not considering that I can wet my feet.'

'*Fortune de guerre*,' said Tom, as he was passing along a slippery part of the quay; up went both legs, and he was making a stern board, as he slid down the incline plane, his timber toes sticking out like the catheads of a ship, his cocked-hat swimming away like a Portuguese man-of-war, and he himself never stopping until he was fairly launched. A crowd of watermen soon restored the old boy to his equilibrium. I once more took him in tow, we fetched the tap, and were very shortly as comfortably employed in smoking as the most arrant tobacconist could ever have wished to see us.

'Tom,' said I, 'that taking of Curaçoa was a gallant affair: for it's not every man who will run into a harbour bristling with guns and stocked with soldiers, and a fleet. How many had you?'

'How many?' said Tom; 'why, we did not muster altogether more than seven hundred and fifty: they might have eaten us, and no trouble either.'

'Well, where did you steer to after that, Tom?'

'Steer to I said Tom, 'why, we steered about the West India and home again, and so on until 1809, when I was drafted on board the *Bucephalus*, and went to the

ing. We did not make much of that, although it was much harder work than Curaçoa.

'I don't know how it is, old shipmate,' he continued, 'but we sailors never get on so well when we have to act in conjunction with the soldiers: either the ships get there before the time, or the soldiers are beat before we come up; and I think the best plan is always to have it to ourselves; then, if we are touched up roughly, why, we slip our cables, loose sails, and they may blaze away until they are blind; but when it comes to covering retreats, as they call it, why, we are sure to botch the business. I never shall forget some of our lads afterwards in America being shoved ashore with a musket to march with the soldiers, and when a herd of swine hove in sight, didn't we fire at them—that's all, and chase them till we heard, "Halt! halt!" but we never came to a halt until we had got a string-halt on the pigs' hind-legs, and then we moored the whole fleet of them, with a cable each way; and after all, they were the best prisoners we made.'

'But I'm all adrift with Flushing, and certainly know little enough about it; for, with the exception of firing at a low town with rockers and shells, and running in and out of shoals—aground one moment and afloat the next—it's very little we did, and the soldiers did no more. But, Lord! Ben, how they did die! Sheep with the rot was a joke to them! They went off worse than at Jamaica in the sickly season! not all the Skeedam, or the schnaps of Beverland, could save them; and a pretty bother there'll be amongst them at the last pipe! Ay, Ben, it's often, since two of my stumps have been boiled down, as a saucy chap said the other day, that I have taken to thinking about the last launch; and if I could be shoved overboard in a hammock, in three or four hundred fathom water, after I'm dead, I should like it better than getting a kick from one or a cuff from another in the churchyard. Who knows but what a left handed boat-woman's-mate might be alongside of us to fetch us our way aloft?'

'Well, talking's dry work; and this is the first time I have ever come to an anchor in the Dolphin, and although I swore never to have any more grog for a fortnight, yet I think I must treat resolution to a glass, and my promise to a pipe. Here! hulloa! ship ahoy!'

God for us, the landlord, freshened hawse for Tom; who, when he had got his pipe in his mouth and his grog before him, looked like a real pensioner, who had left his legs and his cares behind him, began to talk of past days, and it was some time before I got him on the right tack to finish his sea-service before he ran ashore for ever. He was always laying his anchors out to

got in, and we went off. That, Ben—that was the only time Sir Edward got a shot at a three-decker. He got one broadside afterwards at an eighty-gun ship we had managed in the *Boyne* to separate from the main body; but she got into Toulon with only one or two shots in her side and eighteen in her stern.

'This was our work,' Tom continued; 'and between that and refitting at Mahon, and sometimes running over to Genoa, we got through the years until the peace came and Bony was shoved ashore at Elba to get a good night's sleep, and give us another chance of a penn'orth of steps at Portsmouth. But before we got to Old England again, we went down among the Barbary boys, and had the admiral's flag on board of us. If they had not done just what the admiral liked, which was to pay us some dollars and send some slaves away, we would have made such a noise in the bay of Algiers that fish would have been dear in the market. Well, that was done; home we came; and, as usual with all stationers, went to Portsmouth.

"Well, Tom," said I to myself, "here you are all safe after the war, with a grisly head and a petty officer's rating; and now you may just ship a broom under your arm and sweep a crossing, or volunteer and be refused by the captain of a collier. What am I to do," thinks I, "on half-pay?—nothing a day and feed yourself won't do. And now, although I've grumbled occasionally about a piece of pork being bad, and the beef being made out of a salted horse; yet I'm thinking that when the pay is gone, ship's allowance will be better than monkey's—more kicks than halfpence."

"Well, I turned all this end for end in the cable-tier of my mind, and I did not like it. I was getting old in the service, but I had not a friend left in the world. I had done my duty like a man, and I had been as often in action as any man in the fleet; but what was that? I had not a shot in my butt, and my spurs were all safe and strong. I knew that if I went to volunteer for a ship on the peace-establishment, the first lieutenant would have turned round upon his heel, never have looked at my certificates, but would say, 'Very badly, my fine fellow; you may have been with Nelson, Collingwood, and Exmouth—for they had made a lord of Sir Edward Pellew)—but we want young active men. Here, Mr. Jonas, see this old fellow out of the ship.'

"Then, if I had gone to a West Indian, the skipper would have said, 'No, my lad, I can't take you. Men-of-war's men always want grog, and they don't like working all day and night.' In fact, Ben, I began to think, that let a man serve his country as truly as he would, he'd find it hard to get that to be pretty cleanly—so he crept

the shot of the French or the knife of the Spaniard, he might have all the pleasure of dying by starvation in the streets. What can an old sailor turn his hand to?

'I had all this before me. I was never an idler; and although rather wild at Portsmouth, was tame aboard. We were to be paid off; the pay-books were made up, and Tom Topral likely to turn fisherman's boy in his old age, when one morning, just before we were to be sent adrift, whom should we see coming alongside but the admiral. He used to play these tricks in Port Mahon; and no skipper knew that he might not be roused out of his cot at daylight to find the commander-in-chief looking on at the holy-stoning of the decks. Well, Brace, no sooner does his lordship come aboard, than the boatswain and his mates were at work to turn the hands up, and aft we all came on the quarter-deck. The officers were all in attendance, and we did not know if the gratings were going to be rigged, or the admiral going to preach.

"My lads," said he, "the fewer words I use, the better you will understand me. We have sailed together some time, and we are pretty well acquainted with one another. Here is a letter from the Admiralty, desiring me to fit out a squadron for very particular service in the Mediterranean—that kind of service which you all like;—in short, it is to attack Algiers. Now you all know you are ordered to be paid off, who amongst you will volunteer to serve under your old commander-in-chief, and enter on board the *Queen Charlotte*?"

'You know, Ben, when an admiral speaks, Jack is always silent; and it's a long time before he gets his jawing tacks on board. Well, there was one fellow turning his hat round as if he expected to find Spanish dollars in the rim; another was flattening his hair down and looking as if he was slapping the winch of his lungs to get a word up; and a third was shuffling his feet about, as if he was getting ready to dance a horn-pipe; but not a man spoke a word—they all stood like a flock of sheep in a quill, huddled together and keeping close to each other.

"What! not one?" said his lordship: "is there not a man in the *Boyne* who will sail with me?"

"I'll enter, my lord," said I; "but I should like a day or two's liberty to get rid of my money; and then I'd go round the world with your lordship."

"That's well spoken, Topral," said the admiral (for he was not the one to get on board a ship and not know his crew); "you shall have your present rating; and I hope that in twenty-four hours you will have found out enough to spend, and a dear one on board the *Queen Charlotte*. I am, my dear son, your obedient servant."

three cheers as we shoved off: and we had a regular spree.

'The admiral was quite right: in four-and-twenty hours I hadn't enough money to buy a quid of tobacco; so I got a boat, and away I went on board the *Queen Charlotte*. In about three days I was amongst almost all my old shipmates.

'Jack met the parson on shore, but he sheered off when Jack hailed him across the street and asked, "If he was not a pretty considerable humbug of a parson to go aboard a ship and try to pocket the pay of the men, and then get drunk and fall down the hatchway!"

'Well, Ben, I've often thought that that was the most impertinent thing I ever remember; to think that we lads, who sailed round the world, knew every corner where a grog-shop stood, and thrashed every nation that ever wore a flag, should be treated like a set of dogs, and only given so many half-pence, for fear we should get sick in the bun shop. These Methody fellows caught some of the comical; but they didn't make much of a haul with us. Who knew if they weren't lawyers under false colours?—at any rate, the black flag was not likely to tempt us. I believe every one of them who are such sanctified fellows that they won't let a sailor have a glass, and want to keep his money, are nothing more or less than a set of pirates; and after they had plundered the ship, they would scuttle the hull, and send you to blazes in a moment. No, no; let's have it all in the regular way: let's have the chaplain to preach, and the captain to read the articles of war; give us our grog, and touch up the man who skulks; then I'm much mistaken if we don't beat all the world, as we have done before. But to make sailors, Ben, a tea-drinking set of Chinese, and to cram them with Methody, is altering the man as much as they altered the old ones when they cut off their tails!

'Cut off what?' said I, for I thought Tom was running his rig upon me; 'cut off a sailor's tail! What, do you want to make them like shepherd's dogs, and have their hair cut round a skimming-dish, like a Malay's head? What, Tom, give them only half allowance of grog, and turn their spirit-rooms into tea-chests, like the hold of an Indiaman? No, no, Tom; I'm like the old woman who believed the mountains of sugar and seas of milk, but wouldn't believe the flying-fish; and I'm blessed if I believe you.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

BATTLE OF ALGIERS.

'I knows all about it, you see, for I was quartered on the poop at the signals. Well, down we runs; when the admiral, both ways bent for a belly-full, makes the general signal for dinner—and many's the brave fellow that never bolted another. But 'twas no time to be nice in stowing away ground-tier grub—so you may suppose every man was at his gun in a crack.'—*Naval Sketch-Book*.

'We were not long in harbour. Directly it was known that we were going out to fight, and not to be stuck in Malta or Gibraltar, eating figs and exchanging biscuit for sausages, plenty of the right sort—men who had been half their lives working guns—volunteered; and before the 25th of July, on which day we left Portsmouth, five sail of the line (in which were the *Queen Charlotte* and the *Impregnable*), three frigates of the large sort, and two of the small ones, five gun-brigs, and four bomb-vessels, were manned and ready for sea. There was no necessity, Ben, for the press-gang: only let your real tar know that he is not going to sea to do nothing, but that the old work is to be done over again, and you may catch as many of them as would man all the ships in the navy. I never saw men come on board more determined to have prize-money: some of them, to be sure, had already been in action on shore, and mustered the first Sunday with a dark dab about both eyes; but they left their pay and their prize-money behind them. I'm told that half the captains and lieutenants in the navy volunteered, and that you might have manned a frigate with officers; they couldn't go in only five large ships, unless they went as captains of the guns.

'On the 28th we started from Plymouth and stood down the Channel; and from that time, when we fished the anchor, until we anchored at Algiers, we had not many hours to look after our clothes-bags. There we were, directly we had swallowed our cocoa, hard at practice with the guns. There was a twelve-pounder east adrift on the quarter-deck, and a large target stuck from the fore-topmast studding boom, and we had to blaze away at that. Of course, when the ship rolled, the target rolled; and for a week I would have bet my half allowance of grog against a marine's powder-belt, that the target was as safe as a man in irons.

'At last Joe Miller hit it. I think he shut his eyes when he fired; but he was patted on the back, and they gave him a glass of grog: and when 'he other first and second captains of the guns saw that if they made a hole in the rope yards, it let rum out of the bottle, they began to be more cautious, and before we got to Gibraltar, I wouldn't have swung in the target for all the prize-money

Turks do, but out sword and give the donkey a touch in the stern that would have made even a pig forge ahead. Down went neddly's head, and up went his tail, and he began pitching about like a ten-gun brig in a head sea, working the doctor into the wall; when smack came a stick upon his crupper. He forged ahead fast enough then, and his hind legs gave the basket such a jog that the baby awoke, and set up a cry that might have been heard at the palace.

"They seized the doctor and child instantly, and I had just time to get down to the boat and shove off with the mother and daughter. Ay, they might have found out then that they were women, for they piped their eyes and swabbed their faces, and called out for the boy and the basket; but the devil a word did they say about either the fruit or the doctor, who by this time, I should think, is about getting back to his own shape again. Well, lads, what do you think the Dey does? He sends for the child, and it was a toss up if he roasted and ate it, or pitched it into the harbour; however, something went right at that time, and he sent the child on board; but he has kept the doctor, the consul, and everybody else he could find ashore. And, Lord have mercy upon them all! I wouldn't be in their clothes for all the shag-tobacco in Virginia!—You couldn't give a chapa drop of water, could you?—but perhaps your grog has been served out?"

"I took the hint, Ben; but before I could wet his throat down came the captain, the boat was off, and we under sail.

"On the 26th we made the land, and then we began to look about us in earnest. The admiral had made up his mind not to stand shilly-shallying, and sending messengers and getting no answers; for Turks are never in a hurry to talk, and when they have to write an answer, they take care to have time enough to mend their pens. As there was no secret in the matter, we all knew what we were going about just as well as the admiral. At daylight on the morning of the 27th, when I came to relieve the quartermaster of the middle watch, there was the place in sight, and looking for all the world like a large man-top of a ship set out to dry on the side of a hill; narrow towards the head and broad at the foot; the reef-points standing for streets, whilst the walls, which we could see as plainly as we could see the lighthouse, looked like the beach ropes. It appeared nothing else, Ben, but for muzzlers and big guns! batteries south of the town, batteries north of the town, batteries over the town, and batteries under it. And then comes the pier and Mole-head, which must have taken all the donkeys between Tetuan and Tunis to have carried the tonnage of the guns to

built them. We lay almost becalmed, with our heads towards the place; and as we looked through the haze of the morning, the town appeared larger, and the batteries bigger, than perhaps they really were; but when I looked round at the squadron going to attack it, I thought that we must be blown out of the water, and that if any of us came down again with our arms and limbs, we should be jammed into our right shapes again by a donkey in the gateway.

"I had been on shore often before at Algiers, and I knew the place as well as if I had carried the stones to build it; for when I was there in the *Boyne* getting water, I got leave from the midshipman, after the breeze was fixed and the water running, just to step through the gate and see what it was like. Well, there I saw houses jammed together, built of stone, with walls so thick that I thought one could make a defence for the other, and that nothing could hurt the second street after the first one was knocked down. Then I got into the Fish-market, and there was a battery, if well managed, strong enough to sink a three-decker; and when I walked round the Mole, I said to myself, "I should like to see all the ships in the world come alongside of this, and let me have only three hundred blue-jackets, and the guns fitted with tackles" (for I don't understand that hand-spiking them out, when one good haul, and out it would run to the wall). Many's the time I looked into the coffee-shop and saw these chaps sitting cross-legged like tailors, with more pistols and swords than ever were used to cut out the *Hermione*; and then I used to imagine that these Turks thought of nothing but smoking and fighting. They were a fine stout set of fellows, and did not care for death any more than they did for their law against drinking grog. I've seen them turn it down by quarts, and well they may. Did any man yet have a thing denied him and not wish for it? When there's no liberty to go on shore, don't we all wish to go directly? whereas, had the word been passed "for those who wanted liberty to go on shore to go aft on the quarter-deck and put their names down," not thirty would have gone; and I heard the parson say one morning, when somebody had eaten *his* hot roll, that, "like Adam with an apple, the roll never would have been touched if it had not been the property of another." But this is all human nature, Ben. Fancy how we lay—forced for soft-tack when the first lieutenant could not let the lum-boat come along, did it stop a man's grog, and he'd get drunk if he can.

"The time was near at hand when many a brave fellow who was then asleep in his hammock would be lashed up in it before the morrow, or launched overboard without it, and yet how quietly they slept!—at



what ship answered first. The stops seemed to break all at the same moment, excepting on board the *Superb*, and the signal-man there was determined not to be last, so he sent the flag aloft without any stop at all.

"Put the helm up, Mr. Gaze," said the admiral: and Mr. Gaze, who was the master, called out as quietly as if he was going to wear ship at sea, "Up helm, quartermaster!"—"Ay, ay, sir!" said I, and round flew the spokes.

"The sails were trimmed, and each ship steered for her station. I was at the weather-wheel; and although I did think a bit, yet I never took my eye off the lighthouse, which Mr. Gaze told me to keep in a line with a flag-staff. "Yes," said I to myself, "here we go, right before the wind on a lee-shore, to see which is hardest, iron or stone, into a place not large enough to swing a decent-sized bumboat; and if we are to get out again, we must haul her over the Mole-head;—for the breadth across was not more than three hundred and fifty feet, and how the devil were we to work a three-decker out of that horse-pond?"

"Starboard a little, Toprail!" said the master.

"Starboard it is, sir," said I.

"We must anchor by the stern, Gaze," said the admiral.

"Certainly, my lord!" said the master; not looking round the devil a point; but continuing, "Steady-ee!"

"Steady it is, sir!" said I.

"The wind was light, and we slipped along gently through the water. All hands were at quarters: the sail-trimmers stood ready to shorten sail, whilst the men on the lower deck were to attend to the cables. Well, Ben, as we got closer and closer, I expected a Turkish salute, for now the Mole-head seemed coming on board of us. But no, there they were, sitting as I told you before, and not a blessed one of them was afraid of the flying jib-boom shoving them off the battery!

"Shorten sail, Brisbane!" said the admiral; and everything was clewed up, and we went gently to our station.

"Let go the anchor, Gaze!" said his lordship.

"Hold on for a moment!" said the master with a louder voice. "My lord, we must go a little farther in;—now I think we are about right to rake the Mole-head!" Down went the anchor from the stern, a hawser was run out to a brig, and the jolly old *Queen Charlotte* lay like a duck on the water, with her starboard broadside ready to light the Turks' pipes. I lashed the wheel, and jumped upon the poop to assist Simpson if any signals were to be made. "And," says I, "if those Turks understand English, they must think it odd that we

come poking in here, right under their guns, and calling out the soundings as if we were going into one of our own harbours." Well, by way of letting them believe their ears if they doubted their eyes, we waited until we were all stoppered and snug, and then we gave them three such cheers as made the whole batch of them take their pipes out of their mouths, and they sent the smoke after the mouth-piece as coolly as I should have done at the Jolly Sailors.

"The admiral seemed to know what answer we should get to the cheer; and as he did not want to hurt the smokers, he waved his hat, for he was on the poop, to the Turks, and kept saying, "Get out of the way, will you? I'm going to fire!" But they looked at him with as much composure as a boatswain's mate looks at a man lashed to the gratings. "Stupid fellows!" said the admiral, "will you get out of the way?" And he kept waving his hat with as large a sweep as a chap makes when he is mowing the governor's grass.

'Just at this time, when the *Leander* was the only ship which had taken up her position besides ourselves, the silence was disturbed by a shot from the Lighthouse-battery, which came smack in amongst us.

"Stand by!" said the admiral. Two or three more followed the first; and as the fight was fairly begun by the Turks, he called out, after again waving to the people, who were close to the muzzles of the guns, "Fire!" The whole broadside was blazed at the word, and no man was left on that pier-head who had not his pipe put out. Close as we were, I could see distinctly the effect of our shot. The top of the Mole-head seemed almost smashed; but the smoke (for all the batteries opened their fire) soon clapped a stopper upon all observations in that quarter.

"The *Superb* was the next ship to us, and she got all snug without much damage. The *Minden* was next to her; then came the *Albion*, and last of all the *Impregnable*. These four line-of-battle ships were with their broadsides to the broadside of the Mole-battery; whilst the *Severn* and the *Glasgow* were on our larboard quarter, astern of the *Leander*, which ship was abreast of the Fish-market—for of course the Turks did not want any fish that day—they had to look out for their own souls!

"I suppose, Ben, ever since Trafalgar, there never was so much noise made about a parcel of Turks. We saw them driven into the batteries like a set of donkeys; and no sooner had a whole batch of them been blown into Jericho, than in comes a new set to fill up their places. In the meantime we were not left to look at them in comfort. The whole contents of the inner part of the harbour seemed determined to

were burnt by Mr. Richards from our barge, and we only lost two men in so doing. But a Mr. Pocock from the *Hebrus*, a gentleman who had been under Sir Peter Parker in the *Abraham* in America, and who was a regular devil-may-care man as far as shot and shell were concerned, pushed alongside in a rocket-boat; the Turks made a desperate attack upon him, and he and nine of his crew were killed in a minute. The boat came out with only three men left in it, and these three were half inclined to try it again; but we were devilish glad there was no occasion for her going back: the whole batch of the Turks were burning, and one drifted out so near us that I thought my whiskers were a-fire.

'Well, I never scarcely tell you, that the business was settled to a certainty; the ships were destroyed, the batteries beaten in, and the town shaken; but when night closed in, there we remained without a breath of wind to blow us clear of the harbour. If the calm had continued, why, Ben, between you and me, considering the magazines on board the different ships were getting so empty that the pursers' stewards might have turned them into candle-boxes without any fear of their blowing up, I'm thinking that we might have carried sand, as well as the donkeys, to repair our own work! Ay, when the sun went down and it began to be dark, I can't say that I felt so easy as I could have wished. I thought I should have been a slave, for I could not shut my eyes to the danger and say, "Never mind, Tom; many's the day you have weathered, and the same little club which sits up aloft to look after you, will get you out of this scrape!"

'The admiral had been wounded and had gone below, and he must have felt quite satisfied with his crew, by the cheers they gave when they heard it was nothing serious. We had already swung the ship's head round to seaward; but the devil a flaw of wind by two bells had come towards us. The flag at the mast-head was banging upright and downright like a jackass's fore-leg; and although I kept my eyes aloft like a Methodist parson at prayers, yet I could not see it move. We ran out hawsers and got boats to tow; and about four bells a light air came from off the land, we dropped our canvas and were standing out. Well then, Ben, I felt as a man should feel who had been in such a hurry—blaze of way from four bells. In the afternoon four bells in the night watch. I let the poop and got to the wheel, cut off the tacking-lines, and dropped my hands on the spokes, having given it a bit of a twist to find out if all was right astern of us.

'Although we had given up the idea, the Turks let not. The battle continued, the whole could only and work for the time

masons; but one or two forts over the town, and which if we had blazed at until now we never could have struck, continued to play upon us. The hawsers were cut and the tow-ropes smashed; but as we had just steerage-way from the breeze, it did not much signify. We were creeping out, and the rest of the fleet were getting under weigh as fast as they could. The master called out, "Port a little, Toprail!" I heard it, Ben, but I couldn't answer. A shot had come through the quarter deck port from that cursed battery I told you of, and both my pins were shot off below the knee.

'Mr. Gaze not hearing the answer, stepped to the wheel, and I should have been dead enough if he had not called a couple of stout hands and sent me below. I saw no more of the action; but I heard the thunder roll over our heads, for it came on to rain and thunder and lightning. I heard the cables as they ran through the hawse-holes, and before eight bells had struck and the watch were relieved, I was in my hammock, short of both legs, and had gone through all the business of docking, without once singing out to the doctor "to hold his hand."

'Well, Ben, you know the rest. The Dey had had quite enough of that day; and, although he might have known that powder could not last for ever, unless they could get the saltpetre out of the salt-water—and you know going to sea they hoist the blue peter—yet he was such an ass as to come to the terms we sent in by the flag of truce: whereas, had he sent back his compliments to know if he could assist the admiral in repairing his ships for him to sail back again, not all the Exmouths, or Collingwoods, or Nelsons, that ever commanded a fleet, could have forced him to beg pardon for his impudence. We couldn't have returned to the fight. I tell you, Ben, some of the ships had already taken the powder out of the bags; and the batteries on the hill, which had never heard the whiz of a shot or the burst of a shell, might have fired away at us until another fleet came from Southend.

'It was a great action, Ben, a noble action! a daring action! but it was a lucky action; and as they say fortune favours the brave, so it favoured the admiral. And I'm thinking it did as much for me; for if that shot had not taken off two of my spars, I might not have got moored in Greenwich Reach, but have been condemned, hulk and all, to twist about a broom over my mast-head, like a Dutchman for sale—or gone begging about the country with a wooden drum and a straw hat, to ask those for charity who were in those days, Ben, a little more indebted to the wooden walls of Old England, than some of them would have

Time came, I was there, and Tom at anchor in a dry dock. Jorum did not open the gates to float the hull, although it was Saturday night, which was the night agreed upon by the old host for returning some of the money in kind which had fallen from Tom's pockets during his dancing days at Plymouth.

'I say, Jorum,' said Tom, 'did I ever tell you a yarn about Algiers?'

'Oh!' said Jorum, twisting round like a pig in a squall, or like a monkey in chase of his own tail, 'did you ever tell me of anything else? I'm blessed if I don't know every man's name, from Exmouth's to Pocock's, and from Milne to Miller. I begin to think Mr. Topgail, that you must be Joe Miller yourself.'

'Well, don't be surly, old fellow! We are all winding-up fast, and some of us may not weather the March gales! Come, give us a drop, and I'll tell you about Napier's business with the Portuguese.'

'I don't want to hear anything about Napier and his Portuguese! I've read it all in the papers. You talk of a *drop*—hang me if I don't think you would drink a cask full! and as for a barrel, I should be sorry to see that at your lips!'

'Ay,' said Tom, 'breakers ahead is a sign of shoal water! You don't want me to run on the bank and be high and dry?'

'Run on the bank?' said Jorum, who took this in another sense than Tom intended it. 'No, I don't want that; we have had lots of those breakers already!'

'What day of the month is this, Jorum?' said Tom, apparently recollecting something.

'What game are you up to now?' said the landlord. 'Why, it's the 14th of February.'

'Give us your hand, Ben,' said Tom; 'eight-and-thirty years ago you and I were about something else than thinking of beer and pipes at this time!'

I gave Tom a hearty shake, and said I, 'That's true, Tom; but after such a day's work, a drop then would not have been unwelcome.'

'Why, what did you do eight-and-thirty years ago?' said Jorum, looking as knowing as a Johnny Crow at Jamaica.

'Give us your hand again, Ben,' said Tom, not noticing the landlord's question at all. 'When I think, that was the first action we were ever in together; for I was in the *Excellent* when she ranged up to take the fire off the *Captain*, when Nelson clapped his helm a starboard and ran alongside of the *Saint Nicholas*. My eyes, Ben! I can fancy you as proud as a dog with two tails, carrying the swords under your arm!'

'I say, Tom, did you ever hear my song about that business?' said I.

'No,' said he,

'Will you hear it, old Jorum?' said I.

'Certainly,' said he.

'Chorus,' said I.

'Done,' said he. 'Come, Tom, take your beer: I wish it would put your pipe out.'

'Now, Ben,' said Tom, 'never mind the smoke.'

'On February the fourteenth, St. Vincent's Cape not very far,

We spied a noble Spanish fleet of twenty-seven men-of-war;

Ten frigates too we counted, and the brig they had moreover,

All under the command of one Don Josef de Cordova.

Hurrah! there they are, all with colours flying,

And Spanish ships and enemies—of that there's no denying.

'We had but sixteen ships with us, but all our hearts were firm and good:

Old Jervis he commanded us, with Nelson, Troubridge, Collingwood:

With many other captains bold, resolved to fight the harder

When they saw the Spanish four-deck'd ship the *Santa Trinidad*.

Hurrah! here they are; how soon the guns will rattle!

Up goes a signal now—look out—"Prepare for battle."

'Brave Troubridge soon commenced the fight, cut through the Spaniards' straggling line;

Then Nelson cheer'd—"Hurrah!" said he, "there's some of them shall soon be mine."

The *Victory* pour'd her broadside in; the Spaniards flinch'd the fun though,

As the colours soon came tumbling down of the *Salvador del Mundo*.

Hurrah! there they are; blaze away, my gallant boys!

Never mind your legs or arms, the grape-shot or the noise.

'Brave Nelson in the *Captain* sought the largest ship of all the fleet;

And how, my eye! the shot did fly, when these two vessels chanced to meet

The *San Josef* back'd her comrade up, with the *Nicholas* and *Isidore*;—

The first she carried eighty guns, the latter had but seventy-four.

Hurrah! here they are!—Boarders fore and aft, be ready:

"Fellow me," said Nelson, "lads;" and "Follow me," said Berry.

'He boarded the *Saint Nicholas*—in a minute she was captured then;

The *Holy Joe* still blazed away, still "Follow me, my gallant men,

Forward! forward!" Nelson cried; "my noble captains, stick to me,

And Nelson bridge shall bear us on to Westminster or Victory!"

Hurrah! here we are; the admiral is dead below,

We've captured a good pair of them—the *Nicholas* and *Holy Joe*

'Thank you, doctor,' he continued; 'thank you kindly. Might I have a glass of brandy before they try to move me? I should like one cheer more for Collingwood—one more glass.'

'No, no, my good fellow,' replied the doctor; 'it would kill you! Come, Brace, take him to his cabin, and I will come and see him there. Look sharp.' And saying this, he left the room.

'Why, I think he's dying,' said Jorum.

'No,' said Tom. 'I'm worth two dead men now!'

The doctor just looked back. 'He has rallied wonderfully,' he said. 'Now, Brace, look sharp! And I heard the horse trot away a moment afterwards.'

Tom shut his eyes, but continued,—'The log's marked up; the glass is nearly out, and I must call the man who is to relieve me. But, Jorum, just one drop more.'

'Cheer up! cheer up!' said I; 'you have done your duty to your king and your country, and the parson will look after your soul. Get a shutter and a pillow, Jorum.'

'None of your making an old woman of me, Ben!' said Tom in a firm voice. 'Borrow a tarpaulin-hat, and stick my scraper on the top of it—that's a sailor's proper pillow. Besides, my head has carried the hat long enough, and now it might as well carry the head;—tie for tie, you know, Ben, and no favour.'

'I hope,' said I, 'Tom, we shan't have to clap the hat elsewhere.'

'I have faced Death,' said he, 'too often to be afraid of him; but since my strength has begun to fail me, my eyes to get dim, and my allowance to puzzle me, I may as well be off. But I shan't strike my colours without a struggle. No; I'll never haul down my ensign until the hull's sinking! Now then, Ben, heave and a weigh!'

'Now, lads,' said I, 'let's lift him steadily; there, jump off the table, youngster,—I've got his head; go to his heels, boy, and stand by to lift.'

'He'll go a long way, Ben, if he goes to my heels; he may pin us them as hard as he likes. Gently, Ben; I feel very giddy like, as if I could hold on a ring-bolt to avoid falling up.'

'Are you ready?' said I; 'then lift!'

'Stop,' Ben, said Tom; 'is my good hat under my head?'

'Yes, Tom,' said I.

'That's all right then,' he remarked; 'for when a prisoner's hat is placed on his body, then it is a dead go!'

'Lord!' said the boy, as he got hold of Tom's wooden pins; 'it will never be toes up with you!'

'Where's the doctor, Ben?' said Tom.

'Gone long ago,' said I.

'Oh! is he?' said Tom; 'then, put me down, and I'll walk home. It's a dead go.'

same to you;—I thought he was alongside of us. Here, Jorum,' said Tom, as we placed him upright upon his pins; 'you and I are quits!'

'Not exactly,' said Jorum; 'the score's high!'

'Yes, but an agreement is an agreement all over the world! It is fifteen years ago now since you agreed to clear off my score if I showed you the ball that killed Nelson. Ben's a witness; so many thanks to you, and a good night! I watched every day when the doctor came home on his pony, and as the chalks were many, and it was a weight upon my conscience, I thought if I could sham a die in your house, I might get the doctor here. I heard the trot of the animal—bless its heavy feet!—before I gave the cheers; you know the rest; and now I'll go and pitch the medicine out of the window, sleep like a top, and be out of debt to-night and danger to-morrow!'

'Well,' said I, 'man and boy have I lived for the last seventy years, and had lots of greenhorns in *lines*, yet I never should have thought of such a trick as this. A boy might have done it; but for old Tom to have set about it—to have clapped on such a face and spun such a yarn! I should just as soon have thought of seeing the Grand Turk turn Governor of Greenwich. I wonder where the wit of Tom will cease?'

'Why, nobody gives up his fun until he is obliged,' said Tom. 'So now, I'll go to bed. Come along, Ben: I'll get you to pull off my legs, for my back is stiff from the fall—Good-night, Jorum! Lord love you! if you get to windward of Tom Toprail, you have only one more to weather! And now the heavy ballast which almost foundered me being pitched overboard, I can hold on a little longer, and pay and go, like a hawk from a boat.'

I got Tom to bed; he was rather giddy, but the next morning he was wonderfully well. What with the fall, however, and the quantity he drank, Tom was not likely to see the next Christmas-day. He was aware of this; and having heard that people settled their worldly concerns before they tripped their last anchors, he sent for me one day, and said, 'Ben, I should like to make my Testament into a will, as they call it; and as you learnt to write, and moreover are a scholar of a man, perhaps you'll set to work and chalk it out. But I'll tell you what to write; because I'm given to understand that it must be a man's own will, and that if he is not mad enough to set anybody else's wishes, it will be attended to by the king and the crown of the hospital. So bring yourself to an ink and pen, and write it all down.'

'Now, Tom, Toprail,' I began, 'considering my giddy Ben, in my opinion, action, who did for me a while, and having lost

born a fisherman and lived a seaman, I might as well die in a cabin as in a house. Besides, when I saw all my messmates about me, it made me think of the many happy days I had enjoyed; and I soon resolved that I would die amongst those with whom I had lived, fought, and bled.

Every day of my life I walked through the Painted-hall and looked at Nelson; and now I was convinced that old age was creeping fast upon me, for every object appeared dizzy, and although I wiped the glasses of my spectacles, yet day after day I saw worse out of the only eye which had served me for thirty years.

Susan was the worse for wear also. Her eyes were not so bright as they had been; her face was getting like a ploughed field: for what was once all youth and beauty, was now wizened like a half-frozen monkey; the skin was sallow and thin, and the cheek-bones seemed to be coming out of the harbour they had so long occupied. Ay, said it is to see how preciously ugly we must all grow, if we only live long enough; and it's all moonshine trying to fill up the scupper-ways with paint or powder. To be sure, amongst us in humble life we are not so particular in endeavouring to outlive ourselves: give us a snuff-box and a pair of spectacles, and we don't care if the chin of our wife gets as bristly as a piece of pork on board a man-of-war, or if the upper lip has as much hair upon it as a Spanish soldier's. We all grow old together; and when we are close alongside of a craft for years in the same harbour, we don't see how gradually she requires paint and putty, and her sides get rather rusty without our thinking that blacking the bends might be beneficial; and when we come to look at the eyes of the rigging, we find they would be none the worse for serving again. So it is with man and wife: all the stores for service wear out so gradually, that they hardly know when to have a survey, or declare them condemned for ever.

I was past seventy—and that's a long run for a man to make; Susan was very near the hazy side of sixty; and we began to wag our heads, and tell the same story over and over again. And I found she forgot in the evening what I told her in the morning; and she used to say, 'Why, Ben, how old you grow! you remember nothing but what I happened thirty years ago.' But she was wrong, for every night I booked up all the day's work, and thus kept my log ready for overhauling; whilst Susan and her only daughter—and she was past thirty—amused themselves with some needles and thread, and talking about their neighbours. It was the day that I made Tom's statement that I saw a great change in Susan; and she met me at the door, saying, 'Good news, Ben! good news!'

'What's it all about?' said I.

'Why,' she answered, 'we have had a lawyer here inquiring for you; and that's the news!'

'And bad enough, dame,' said I, 'it may be: for those land-sharks never come sailing about a vessel unless they have smelt the bait towing overboard. What did he say?'

'Why, that,' said dame, 'I can't well answer; for when he found that you were not within, he said he was obliged to go to town about some action, and he spoke about an assault and battery.'

'Bless me!' said I, 'how very unlucky! Perhaps the gentleman wanted some information about assaulting the battery on the Mosquito coast; and I could have told him all about Nelson, when——'

'Stop, my dear Ben,' said Susan; 'I know all about that, and I should have a bad memory if I did not: I remember all about the birds which ate half of you up, and the ships which sank with the other half.'

'Ah, dame,' said I, 'you're all wrong on that board; but I'll trim the sails of your memory for you.' And I was going to give it her again, when a black-looking fellow hove in sight at the entrance-port of the cottage; and says dame, 'That's him, Ben!' I opened the door, and got the stranger to come to an anchor in the front room; and as I was to speak first, being senior officer, I began—

'Fine day, sir.'

'Rather wet and muddy,' said he. 'Is your name Benjamin Brace?'

'If, sir,' says I, 'you want Benjamin Brace of the old *Agamemnon*—the man who sailed with Nelson from the time he was the size of a handspike, until the day he died aboard the *Victory*; if it's Ben Brace who was at St. Vincent, the Brush, the Nile, Cadiz, Teneriffe, Copenhagen, Boulogne, and Trafalgar—I rather think I am the man, as may be seen from these certificates:—and then I wagged my right-arm stump, and kept shutting the lid of my starboard eye like a weasel in sunshine.

'I don't know,' said the lawyer, 'much about all that; but my object is to find one Benjamin Brace, late of Cawsand Bay, in the county of Devon, and some time since pensioner in Greenwich Hospital.'

'Placed there,' said I, 'begging your pardon for the intimation, for his services to his king and his country. I am the man.'

'Is there no other of that name?' said the attorney.

Up I jumped like a marine when he hears 'Grog ahoy!' at one bell; and clapping my labouring arm akimbo, I looked him right in the face, and says I, 'Did you ever hear of two Nelsons?'

'No,' said the stranger.

a lesson, late in life, of the necessity of taking things coolly, and never desponding until the misfortune arrives. 'That Mr. Tapes' death may be to you a cause of grief, I have no doubt; but it may a little alleviate your sobs and your sorrows to know that he has left his whole property to you and yours.'

'He was a gentleman,' said I.

'Oh! I shall go mad with joy!' said Susan. 'I'll get some black bonnets directly. I'm sure I shall go mad with delight! Ben, I'll buy some crape for your arm. Poor dear old Tapes! How nice the girl will look in black! Well, I always said, one of these days luck would turn. Oh! I must go and tell my daughter;—poor dear old man!'

'There she goes,' said I, 'and not like the rest of us. When the wind is light and the sky is clear, up go the royals and the flying kites; when it is cloudy and murky and squally, then it is reef topsails, up courses, and make the best we can of it under the storm staysails. But with woman, Lord love you, sir! she'd try to carry sky-sails in a squall, and then wonders that all her masts are blown out of her. But I'm obliged to you, sir; it's not Ben Brace who is ungrateful. I own that Tapes did give us the money, and many a time it has made us happy; and I would rather that he had lived, if his conscience did not disturb his sleep. But now he is gone, I would not have you or any man think that I respected him—not I; he behaved badly to his brother, and everyone else he had to do with; and I would rather, after all, that he had lived, and that we had steered steadily along the course which we have kept for the last twenty years.'

'I must be going,' said the attorney, 'for my time is my money. But there is one thing, and a most important one, which I had nearly forgotten: there is a confession drawn up by one Tackle before his execution, and before you are put in possession of what is left you, that confession is to be burnt before the executors; and should the sea have been broken and the confession read, then you can say which would not be the most prudent thing. But we will speak about that in proper time; you must call upon us at Fernald's inn to-morrow or next day, as suits your convenience. And now, as you have nearly picked up your money, I shall wish you good morning.'

'He was right,' thought I to myself, as he went out, 'for when I began to talk about Tackle, I had thought rather a long time, and I had made up my mind which none but an old lawyer could see through. Well, I am glad to see Susan and I'm desirous to see the old man, woman, and child, and to see my way down to the old town-ship which he has bequeathed

scraper and big bell, had heard all about it, and much more into the bargain. But I had now to unlade my cargo of intelligence, and away I steered for old Tom.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TOM TOPRILL'S DEATH.

'But mirth is turned to melancholy,
For Tom has gone aloft!'

DIED IN

Tom had received secret instructions from aloft. He was on his beam-ends in his bed, and he had altered more in two hours than for the last fifteen years. I don't know what he thought of me, for I came into his berth with the end of an old song,

'What signifies life or its riches,
Or any such glittering toys?'

and so forth, when I started backwards like a fellow who runs end-on to a butcher's tray, and gets the handle not in use in his eye.

'What cheer, Tom?' said I: 'why, you look as if you were all aback and had no hands left to brace the yards about; what's the matter with you, shipmate?'

Tom twisted about like a porpoise on the grains, and began to gasp like a harpooned whale. I gave a hail for the assistant surgeon; and when he came alongside of the old tar, he shook his head, and gave me a look as much as to say, 'He's off.'

'Don't you think your honour,' said I, 'that brandy might give him a cast again?' for I recollected Tom's old tricks, and I thought he might be up to beating Tom Cox's traverse; but he never gave a squint of his eye, but laid out as still as a turtle under the hall-door.

'He has broken a blood-vessel,' said the docter; 'and it's a chance if ever he speaks again. He must be kept quite still for the present, and I will do all I can for him; although,' said he, lowering his voice, 'at his age I have very little hope.'

Well, now I could not help thinking that Tom was up to some of his old tricks, and I was very near saying so, but could not get to be so, he turned so pale, and he looked so very pale, and so old, and so full of age, and I got a curse in my head upon him, and I got permission to write to my old shipmate. He was much too near his last gasp to be ready for my squall, so I moved to see the last of him, as a duty bound.

Well, as I was sitting down to begin to rummage his bag, and I had no more to do, and none his duty better, and that from

'I cannot see the necessity of your remaining here, Ben,' she said: 'and too well do I remember the comforts of life, not to wish to return to them. You do not know the value of money—you throw it away without thought, contented with the allowance of the Hospital; but think of me, condemned here to live, although perhaps with money enough to be comfortable elsewhere. And what are the prospects of my removal?—the death of my husband—the loss of the man who has been my protector, my friend—who, when others despised me, never forgot me—who took me from starvation to share his hard-earned money. Well, Brace, when I think of all this, I balance between gratitude to you and the desire to do as you wish, and the folly of remaining in Greenwich Hospital; which is, after all, but the navy pauper-house, built for the poor of all floating parishes.'

'I tell you, Susan,' said I, laying down my pipe, for I was in grief and I smoked, 'that I think more of myself in this uniform, than if I was a Lord of the Admiralty. You may buy the Observatory if you like, if that will make you comfortable; but I will not start my anchors, for I'm moored for life.'

'Do, Ben,' said she, 'speak like a Christian, and not like a sailor.'

'What, dame!' said I, as I puffed out enough smoke to have made the neighbours believe that we had a steam-engine at work; 'a Christian, do you say? Show me if you can find any one who has more of the Christian in him than an English sailor.'

'Well, Ben, bless you; I always knew that your heart was warm,' said Susan; 'but, now Tom is dead, what more can you do for him? so leave this place as soon as you can.'

'What! leave Tom when he has just tripped his anchor and filled his fore-topsail? Not I: I'll see him moored in his last harbour; and be moored by his side too; so that, by and by, I shall be able to assist him in his navigation when he goes southward after his legs. But I must be off, dame: I have got to place the last rigging over his mast-head, to carry him to his grave and see him covered up, and then—'

'Ah!' interrupted Susan, with a tear in her eye, 'I see you care more about your friend than your wife.'

'Susan,' I replied, 'that's the first unkind word you have uttered since our marriage! and before we talk any more about this business, don't you think it would be as well to wait until we know what old Tapes has left us? Come, dame, kiss and let us remain friends! I do believe,' said I, as I passed my sleeve over my face, 'I am an old fool; and yet I would rather see this mark of a good heart, than be able to look on unconcerned.' So I took up my Lat and walked off.

All was done as Tom had desired. I set to work to parcel his tail with new ribbon. I bought the slops he had mentioned, and put them in his coffin; and when he was rigged in his shirt and trousers, I fastened the medals over his heart. I carried him, with some others to assist me, to his grave: I threw the earth over him myself; and when all the rest went away, I lingered by the side of the grave: for my heart was busy in remembering him whom I had known so many years. The rain fell, and the chill air of evening blew upon my old frame, and I felt like a crazy old craft, separated from the convoy with which she sailed, dismantled in a gale, a plank started, the pumps broken, her crew disheartened, and her captain a coward. When I rose to return to my cabin, I had no old messmate to cheer me with a scene of my former life—no friend to listen to me—no one to shake me by the hand, and say, 'Good night, Ben Brace! we have weathered another day!' but silently and slowly I straggled to the Hospital. I crept along to avoid the little noise I made, and I would have given—ay, all that Tapes had left us, to hear the wooden legs of poor old Tom as they formerly stumped along the gallery. As I lay down on my bed, I felt a cold shiver run through me, and sleep, which before came to me as my day's relief, this night never came at all. I thought of Tom without ceasing; his death had unmanned me more than that of the fifty men on board the *Victory*, before she returned a shot at Trafalgar.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

'*Mil.* You lie, I believe.

'*Kemp.* Lie! lie! how strange it seems to me to be talked to in this style!

'*Mil.* Come, come, sirrah, confess.'

King and Miller of Mansfield.

IN the morning when I rose, a strange feeling was somehow all over me; my back ached with pain, and through all my limbs I felt as if a severe rheumatism had attacked me. I was hardly able to dress myself; and when I went to Susan, the first remark she made was, that I looked very—very ill. But I had fixed this day to attend the lawyers, and I was not on the doctor's list; besides which, I wished to have all the business settled as quickly as possible, because I imagined, whilst I lay thinking of Tom about midnight, that I heard a strange noise at the window, which I recollected to have heard called a death watch; and these pains and aches, at my age, were a kind of jog which shook me a little.

'Not at all,' said I, 'if you show me his sailing orders—his testament; because, do you see, although I cannot injure him if he is dead, yet I might hurt his character.'

Upon this they began to talk and to whisper again; and somehow my thoughts turned to days long gone by, when I was boarded by the pirate in the waggon; and I seized hold of my stick, and says I, 'If it's all the same to you, gentlemen, I should like this business to be carried on all fair and above-board. That gentleman, Kite, told me that Tapes was dead, and had left his money to me and mine; and that if I came here I should receive it. Here I am; and if so be that what I have said is all right, and you have got Tapes's testament, read it outright like men, and don't stand shuffling and whispering, and dodging like American bush-fighters. Besides, he told me that the confession was to be burnt before the executioners, without being read; and it will puzzle you, I know, to get all who clapped on the yard-rope together now. So, do you see, when you give me the money and show me the document—for I know a cuckoo from a Jamaica jackass when I see them together, although I am a sailor—then I will burn the confession before as many executioners as you can muster together; although, I tell you, some of them can't answer to their muster now. But until I get what I am told is my own, I shall keep it safe and snug in my lock r here, and that's the long and the short of it; and you may believe it all, for Ben Brace swears to the truth of it.'

'Well, sir,' said Hawk, after he had carried on the war in a whisper, 'we will read you the will; but as the document is rather long, you had better be seated.'

I came to an anchor, for I felt very weak and ill; and I somehow thought that, owing to my cursed folly, I had ruined Susan and her child. I had a good mind to out with the thing and tell the plain truth; but then I knew that lawyers are sharks, and one

ever gets much money from one or the other. Well, I took my chair, and placed it right in front of the whole squadron; and sitting down, I placed my gold cover on my lap, and I clasped my fingers well apart, held on my arm at full stretch, supporting it with the back, and looking as much like one of those punch cups in churches who keep the boys in order, and are allowed to make as much noise as they like themselves; and then, quite forlorn, in my good manners, I called out, 'Go it, my hearties! and if you get to windward of Ben Brace, the devil may change his front hereabout.'

Kite took the word, and after humming to clear his voice, he began somehow after this fashion: 'Know all men by these presents, that God, our Father, the Lord of

them as you like, old Tapes') 'that I, Richard Tapes, being in sound mind and vigour of body, do thus dispose of all my worldly goods and chattels; in the first place recommending my soul to God, in the full hope of a glorious eternity.' 'The devil he does!' said I out loud, for I could not help it. 'Then all I can say is, I'm blessed if I don't expect to die Governor of Greenwich! Beg your pardon, gentlemen, but I could not help letting out a little of the cable of my mind; but the splice is jammed in the hawse-hole, and I'm brought up all standing—so heave ahead.'

Well, they all looked at me rather oddly, and Hawk left the door open, but Kite went on reading and reading, and I could make out nothing, but that the word 'trust,' and 'Hawk,' and 'Kite,' and 'Brace,' and 'Susan,' went over and over again like boys playing coach-wheel: and at last, when I thought all the wind was out of the thin man's body, says I, 'Heave and pull, sir,—unship the bars;—it's of no use heaving round any more; I'm blessed if that gentleman has not how clear through all: I can't understand a word, and I'll pay any of you a golden guinea to put it into English.'

'I thought as much,' said Kite; 'it would be much better if you had appointed——' He got thus far, when Hawk stopped his tongue, and looked at him as if he could eat him.

'Now, Mr. Brace,' said he, addressing himself to me, 'the thing is as clear as lawyers could make it, and adapted to the mearest capacity. The fact is, that the greatest pains were taken by my poor worthy friend Tapes in order that no dispute could arise; and, as you said before—and I think the words capital—the long and short of it is this; and here is the clause: "That if you, according to your promise, have kept the document you possess unopened, the seal entire, and so that no doubt up to that point can be raised, Mr. Kite, Mr. Cartwright, and myself, in conjunction with Mr. B. and n., are to hold the money in trust for you and your wife during the term of your natural life; and afterwards it is to become the property of your wife's daughter, still to continue in trust, for if she dies unmarried or without issue the whole reverts to my de. P. & Co. I do so. I do so." (I missed rather poor which Hawk observed) 'and here is the clause,' he continued, '"then the allowance of fifty pounds a year is to be continued as heretofore, and to cease entirely at the daughter's death."'

'I wonder,' says I, 'he said so, but it in so many words, and then any man could unravel the strands, and get at the *raison d'être*. Well, what's to be done now, sir?' said I.

Sir, I'm oblig'd to you,' said I to Kite; 'you're an honour to your profession. It shows an honest man when he comes forward to protect the old, the poor, and the innocent; but as for that other fellow, who seems as hungry as Port-Royal Tom, he'll find it hard to get the paper, and without it he cannot get the money.'

'Stop, Mr. Brace,' said Hawk, 'and understand me. The money was left under certain conditions: those conditions are favourable to me. You will only rush head-long into ruin by opposing me: a writ of discovery will be issued; your not producing the paper will be the strongest evidence against you; and ultimately, when it is brought forward, you will find a heavy bill to discharge, and no money to do it with; for from this moment I shall stop the payment of the fifty pounds a-year, until the matter is decided. Mr. Kite has, under the influence of his feelings (and I feel for you and yours as much as any man), advised you to keep back this paper; he has advised you badly. The consequences will be ruinous—your wife's misery and want, beyond a doubt.'

'Ah! there it is!' said I. 'For myself, I don't value the money any more than a loaf of soft tack; but for her who has been a kind wife and a good helpmate to me, and who might justly look forward to this money, to make her slip easily off the ways, until the dog-shores are sent adrift,—for her I do feel. But, gentlemen, I am very ill, and nearly broken down; my anchor's short stay peak, my sails loose, the yards braced for canting. Surely you, who call yourselves men, wouldn't run on board of me like a pirate, and rob me of the little I possess as my cargo. I'll do what is right and fair; but I am not going to strike my colours without a broadside; I'm not going to see poor old Susan wrecked on the bars, without veering away some cable to assist her. Here's the paper!' and I clapped my hand in my bosom to get it out again, when Kite said:

'Kite is right, sir. Mr. Hawk, as an honourable member of a club, who possesses a reputation to which it pertains he has no right to yield. You are an old man, and a good one, and I feel sure you will do as I advise, and I shall be glad to send you a proper reward. You have already shown the mark of a showman, and I'll not be a hundred dollars more to you, but a hundred and a year, and when you have got the fifty pounds, you may rest easy, and I'll be satisfied.'

'I'll do as you say, sir, but I'll not be a showman, and I'll not be a hundred dollars more to you, but a hundred and a year, and when you have got the fifty pounds, you may rest easy, and I'll be satisfied.'

'There, my hand, sir,' said I, 'you've got it. I'll go home and be satisfied.'

broken-hearted with sorrow. I could have weathered any squall which only blew against myself; but, instead of towing the craft which has stuck close to my side for thirty years in safety, I have run her down when the harbour of security was under our lee that I can't get over; "I feel it," as Nelson said when his death was approaching, "rising in my breast;" and I am, sir, very ill indeed—I never felt so weak before, and it does not require much of a sea to shake such an old hull to pieces.'

'Will you take a glass of wine, Brace?' said Mr. Kite kindly.

'No, sir, I thank you; I could not drink in this house for the universal world. I can hold on until I get home, although I feel rather weak and giddy.—My service to you, sir,' said I to Hawk; then I bowed to the two others, who had never said a word the whole time, and I left the room. Mr. Kite followed me: 'Take my advice, Brace,' said he, as he shook me by the hand: 'look up that paper in your cabin in the Hospital—don't let a soul read it or look at it; and I need not tell you to act as honourably as you have hitherto done yourself. Get home; you want a doctor of medicine more than one of the laws just now. Don't agitate yourself by telling what has happened to your wife; but keep quiet, and trust in me.'

'It's only yesterday, sir,' said I, 'that I buried the only man who could save a word about Tackle; and when I placed him in his grave, I got thinking about all we had done and seen together, until the evening came on, and the rain fell a little. I got up with a coldness I never knew before, and I was only able to muster up strength enough to come to town, kept up by the hurry of poor Susan, who thought that once more she would wear a pendant from her mast-head, and sink into her grave a respectable old woman. If I have ruined her, I shall never live to hear her tell me of it. God bless you, sir!—Hoy! omnibus, ahoy!—why, you want a crow-bar to pick your ears with—give us a lift to Church-street, and I'll send my land to Mr. Hawk and get my home.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE REAPPEARANCE.

'I'm inhibited!

O, how I am inhibited!

I'm inhibited and inhibited!

'If all these are dead!

My dear old man.

When I got home that evening I did not require the purser's steward to stop my

the hulks,—and somehow I could not plug up the scupper-holes of my eyes, and a tear or two did drop over the lids.

'Forgive me, Ben,' said Susan, as she wound her arms round me,—'forgive me, Ben, or I shall hate myself for ever! It was only in the moment of disappointment that I could say what I did say. There,' she continued, as she took my hand,—'there, only say you forgive my ingratitude, in having said words which have brought tears into the eyes of the most generous of men, and I'll never think of the money any more! Can't we be happy as we have been? There, look at all the little comforts we have got together; and now, in our old age, what would be the benefit to us if we had the whole gold of the world? Only kiss me, Ben—kiss me, Ben, and smile again, and I'll never say one word to make you unhappy.'

I took her in my arm, and as when the sea is the highest, and breaks with the greatest violence on the beach, rushing up to the very cliff, so it recedes the further as it again ebbs back, carrying with it half the shingle which stopped it before,—so did I feel my heart beat twice as strongly for Susan, even for the moment of overflow which had swept over it.

'Ay, Susan,' said I, 'you are right. Is it not odd, that when we have rubbed through life upon short allowance, we should find ourselves, just when the gale is the strongest, and we less able to weather it, with more affection than we required to begin the cruise? So it is through life: the shipwrecked boy who has clung to a plank—the last that broke adrift from the sinking vessel—and who has held to it for his existence until his strength nearly fails him, finds, when assistance does come, ten thousand times more aid than would have served him at the first. It is true, this money might have given you a larger house, and more to eat; but if that cottage is still there, we can do without Tapes's money, which, for my part, may all go to the devil or the lawyer. One thing, Susan, has always occurred to me, and that is, and that is—"not to cry out, and not to faint." A man may shorten his life by not being paid upon the water, but he is a fool who can't sail in a calm because a gale may come. Many's the time I have seen the black cloud settle on the horizon and threaten the heaviest fall of rain; yet a flash of lightning has come, and every drop has been clear of the ship, while the cloud disperses and the bright sun shone full upon us. I'm ill, Susan—more so than you think, and in spite of the rain I'll go to my cabin; for if I was to die out of Greenwich, I should never lay my head in peace. I'll ask Sir William to let you be my nurse; he's too generous to refuse such a favour; and I be-

sides, he knows that I would rather see him at my last moment than any other man alive. Good-night, Susan! I know you'll forgive my carelessness. I never read a word that was in the paper; and, whatever you may think of me, I am sure you will never suspect me of telling a lie. If I get worse in the night, I'll send for you; but I think I can hold on, for I'm made of good stuff. You smile, Susan: God bless you!

She gave me another kiss; and when I walked through the gates, I felt happier than I had done for years, for I felt that she would be able to bear the blow which I had so unconsciously prepared for her.

The next morning I found my chest like a midshipman's—everything on top, and nothing at hand. In stowing away the paper, I had piled everything I could over it; and being, I suppose, a little adrift myself, I did not stow them away as I generally did. I awoke better, but still with some odd feeling which I did not like;—I was anxious to see Susan through the difficulty. When Susan came to see me, 'Oh, Ben,' said she, 'it's all right now!—you are better, and I am satisfied.' We had a little bit of talk, and then she returned home.

The day was very fine, and I thought if I just took the stiffness out of my legs, it would do me good; so I popped on my hat, and taking my stick, I steered away to sun myself on one of the benches; and there I got thinking about steam-boats, and Indians, and every blessed thing but the lawyer and the paper. Thinks I, 'What's the use of masts and sails, and all such expenditure, when, by working a little smoke through a funnel, it does not signify a straw if the wind is foul or fair, but away the vessel will go eight knots an hour, straight on end and make her port.' Well, I got turning this end for end, as my nautical and thinking how nice we should have been served during the voyage if these things had been in use then, and when a moment's opportunity it would be a capital specimen of the next to fit out a good ship, I went buying one long gun on a pivot, and about forty men for a crew—not your pick-up shoddy fellows, with long tails to their coats, and cigars in their mouths, but some of the chips-of-the-old-black-fellows, with large trousers and broad shoulders, who would look to windward in a gale of wind, when it blowed so hard that if they did not shut their mouths they would be blown up;—then it would be—paddle away within long range—make her out well.

I reached her up at a distance—run alongside where the colours are down—clap a tow-rope on her end—make her safe under an English flag, and out again, before a sailing vessel with a foul wind would have got ten miles from the place, and half the privateers on

will find him at his wife's cottage, for he generally goes there about this hour. Poor old fellow! he was rather ill last night, and he is getting very aged for a sailor.' ('Well,' thinks I, 'what can the doctor mean by a great age for a sailor?' but I heard his reason). 'When they first enter the navy,' the doctor said, 'they are habituated to much ardent spirits, and the continued use of them is more pernicious than all the fatigues they undergo. Oh, here is Brace!' he said. I took off my hat, and made a bow. 'This is Lord Nelson's old follower, for whom your ladyship inquired.'

She looked at me—I knew her, for the mole in her forehead was as plain as the seal on a letter. I did not do what my heart prompted me to do—run and kiss her, and welcome her who had come to me at the very moment when I was most beset with difficulty; for I thought it would be wrong for me, an old sailor in the Greenwich uniform, to take hold of a lady covered up with silks, and with a bonnet on her jib large enough for a coal-scuttle! Well, I was fairly aback; and it was of no use turning the hands up to brace about, although I had got stern-way and was backing a small distance off. I can't write what I did feel—it was uncommon to me. I felt as if I could have hugged her and kissed her; and yet somehow I felt as if the thought was a kind of presumption:—I thought my heart bade me go forward like a man and an uncle, and then I thought discipline kept hauling me back: it was a regular squabble between affection and duty; but when the heart's in the right place, affection will carry the day, without neglecting one's duty. The servants were looking—the coachman had placed himself as upright as the pump-bolt—Sir William had just called me—his lordship was eyeing me; when what does Jane do, but she drops her rain-preventor—and she gets head-way upon her, runs me right aboard, claps her arms round my neck, falls to a-kissing me, and bursting out a-crying, said, 'Uncle Ben, Uncle Ben! let this prove that I have not forgotten you!'

'My eyes and limbs!' said old Lanyard, as he hobbled away, 'that is a queer go, surely; there's old Brice a-kissing the lord's wife!'

I am thinking that I should have been done cutright if I had not been afraid to touch her: my stick fell out of my hand, and somehow my arm got round her waist, and says I, 'Blessings on you, Jane! you have hove in sight when the enemy were likely to capture me; and now that I see you—ay, and see you happy—I don't care how soon I die. Lord love you, Jane, and bless you! I always knew your heart was a good one—I knew that you would come and see me.'

'Give me your hand, my fine old fellow,'

says his lordship: 'Jane has often told me of your kindness to her, and the manner in which you behaved to her during one very trying hour of her father's —'

'Belay all that, your lordship,' said I, interrupting him; 'not a word about it: I'm at this moment in great distress about that affair, and if Jane—I beg your honour's pardon, but I can't help calling her Jane—will just let your honour unlay the strands of this difficulty, you will make me and Susan happy for ever.'

'Oh!' said Jane, 'I insist upon going directly to Susan: I have never seen her since I was a little child, and I remember her pretty face.'

'It's better you did not, Jane,' said I; 'for you never will be able to make out her features—she's grown old. We all sweep along that tide together; and although now and then sickness gets us into an eddy and twists us about a good deal, yet we all float along much the same. I dare say you would have passed me half a thousand times and not have known the man who wrapped you up in a blanket and laid you to sleep when your mother and my poor old father slept more soundly. But I must avast, for you'll catch cold, and I must tell Susan you have been here to visit me.'

'No, no,' said his lordship: 'get into the carriage, Brace, and we'll drive to the cottage. Come, Jane, let me hand you in first.' And he walked off with his wife.

Well, it was a fine sight to see those footmen who had jeered me, standing at attention, one fellow holding the door open, and the other standing like a marine at muster, whilst I, the old sailor, was handed into the carriage by a lord. I felt I had always done my duty in this life, and therefore I was not ashamed to look any man in the face.

'Now, Uncle Ben, listen to me,' Jane began; 'and let me run up my history. I dare say you know already that my husband is a sailor. But listen, uncle: when you last saw *her*—for you never would mention her name, you know—and when your last request was for an admission into Greenwich, you never saw me, you truant old fellow! and I was waiting for my last kiss. I shortly afterwards went into the country with her, and remained there until I was sixteen years old—you know I was born in 1792; and now, instead of seeing the pretty little girl, as I was in 1805, you must remember that I am now forty and more, so that I am getting old and speak my mind. I learned from Hardy that you were at Greenwich, and at that time I had only the wish, not the power to serve you. Much as I would have given to have come down here and seen you settled—'

'Moored for life, my dear,' interrupted his lordship.

bower-anchor in a short sea, and then re-collecting that it was Saturday, and that her clean Sunday's cap was upstairs, she bolted away to clean herself to muster at division.

'I beg your pardon, my lord,' said I, 'but I have something to say to you quite alone.' His lordship came into the little garden behind the house, and I began—'Your honour has heard of me alone; and I hope that, whatever character I may have had through life, I have always had that of being all fair and above-board with every man. You seem to be very fond of Jane, and well you may be—as a child, a ronder creature never drew the breath of life; and I feel sure that she has never deceived you.'

'Deceived me!' said his honour; 'certainly never. If she had deceived me, I should have doubted the honour of an angel!'

'Did she,' said I, 'tell you who he was? Did she, before you made a will for life, ever tell you that a foremast-man, a Greenwich pensioner, was her uncle, and that her father—' Here I stopped short and looked at him; for I did not know if I was right to blow the gaff upon her.

'She told me,' said his honour, 'every word about her unfortunate father and all your kindness to her; and, in order to prevent all mistakes, she was married to me under the name of Jane Tackle. I tell you, my good old friend, that when I confessed how much I loved her, she answered, that before she would make any remark upon the subject, I must read a paper she put into my hand; and in that paper was an extract from a newspaper, detailing the execution of her father; and in the envelope was written, that Jane Nelson—for so she was called—was the daughter of that unfortunate man. I loved her the more for her open-heartedness; and, so far from the paper cooling my love, I felt that one who would run the risk of losing such an alliance by bringing forward such unfortunate facts, would adorn any situation of life, and that in her heart was every disposition to virtue. I married her, Ben, knowing this; but I have since learned from her that her father left with you a confession of his former life, coupled, perhaps—for she only has guessed the contents—with some circumstances better forgotten for ever. This paper I want you to give me, in order that I may destroy it, and with it the record of her father's shame.'

'I beg your honour's pardon,' said I, 'but I can't part with that paper. No man has seen the contents of it—it has never been in other hands but mine; and your lordship will know what value I ought to put upon this document by the mischief which has arisen out of it.' And here I told him every

particular of Tapes' death, and the unfortunate business of my having opened the seal.

'Ben,' said his lordship, 'I know you well enough, from all I have heard of your character, to believe every word that you have said; but I very much fear, that if the wording of the will is so express as you mention, we have little chance of overthrowing the attorney; but it shall not be for the want of exertion, or the fear of expense, if we do not disappoint him. How much has Tapes left you?'

'I can't say, your honour,' I replied, 'for the lawyer never mentioned that; but he rubbed his hands and was overjoyed when he found the seal was broken, so that I anticipate there must be a good sum left. It's not for myself, my lord, that I care about this business, but it is for Susan and her daughter; for those two to be robbed by this rascal does hurt me; and when I think that I am the cause of even a doubt, it makes this poor old heart beat quicker, and wears out my old bull more than all the rolings and pitchings in the Bay of Biscay. Susan was once in better circumstances, my lord; and I thought that, after all the squalls had passed, she might run into port with a fair breeze and smooth water.'

'Don't take it so much to heart—I will take care to send you down my solicitor. I will bear all the expense; and, by way of keeping soul and body together until we meet again, take this money; it comes from a sailor to a sailor; and since that fellow has ceased to pay the fifty pounds, you will allow me to pay it, and anything more you may require.'

'Come here, you two old sailors,' said Jane; 'we want a council of war held; but I am going to be president and Uncle Ben is the culprit.'

We walked in, and Jane, Lord love her! to her in our cottage, with a smile of contentment, taking Susan's hand in hers! I could not help saying, 'Such a woman as your ladyship!' she put her finger on my lips and said, 'Jane, if you please, Uncle Ben's old serves to be happy. I have heard the parson say, that a good heart and a quiet conscience carries with it its own reward in the cheerfulness and contentment of the mind; and surely Jane, you can't be happy, when every step of your life has been for the happiness of others.'

'Ben,' said he, 'I shall have you appointed one of his lordship's chaplains; but you take a wrong view of the case in one respect: a youth of labour and toil, followed by an honourable old age, is the greatest blessing of life; and old Ben Brace may lay his head on his pillow, and be certain that a grateful niece will never forget what is due to her uncle, her protector, her friend. Now, come into court, prisoner. You are accused

dark night. He inquired for me, and juggled out a note he had received the evening before from Lord Hennington.

'I come, Mr. Brace,' he began, 'according to orders received last night, to inquire into this business, and see how far it is advisable to contest the matter. I have not been idle, I assure you, Mr. Brace; I have seen the will, and now you must show me the document.'

'Beg your pardon, sir; but I shall do no such thing.'

'But you must,' said he.

'Must!' said I; 'who can make me? who can make a man break his word? is there any law to make a man a rascal?'

'Plenty to save rascals, at any rate,' said the lawyer. 'But just consider: how can I advise you unless I know exactly how far you have committed yourself? Tell me the whole story.'

Well, I spun him the yarn—mentioned the name of the omnibus—the day it happened—the fight—the words of the cad—the name of the other omnibus—the scene at Hawk's, and so on.

'Did Hawk ever have the deed in his hand?'

'Indeed he had not,' said I, 'and never will.'

'Well, then,' said he, 'it appears I can make no more of it at present than to inquire of the cad, and to send word to Hawk that he must apply to me for further information in the case. He will file a bill of discovery, I suppose; but as Lord Hennington is resolved to contest the business to the last, I shall do all in my power to embarrass the proceedings. If anything more transpires, you will hear from me.' And away he went, leaving me more resolved than ever that no man living should see it.

About five o'clock up comes the carriage, and half the neighbourhood turned out to see it. Yesterday's business had given the idle a great desire to know who we were, and all manner of reports were in circulation: some declared Susan was the mother of Jane, who had been stolen in her youth by gipsies, and ultimately married a lord who fell in love with her beauty; others said she was my daughter by a former wife; but every one knew of the kiss in the Hospital, and every blessed mother's son of them had seen the carriage. Now they beset the door, to see Susan, whom they remembered for years, placed in the carriage, and Ben Brace, the old pensioner, driven to London like a lord. I was glad of one thing; which was, that we had no fellows with cauliflower heads and long sticks, stuck up like painters on a grating over the ship's stern—we had only the look-out man on the fore-castle, and he was a jolly-looking fellow.

'Now then, sir, if you please to get in, for I must be in town by six o'clock,' said he; and he opened the door.

'Avast heaving, shipmate,' said I; 'we never sail without ballast; and if we were to carry on without some of that inside lining, we should capsize if we hove in stays suddenly round a corner. But I see you don't understand me: this is it—we must freshen hawse before we start.'

'What!' said he, 'want fresh horses? that is a good one! Why, do you suppose my cattle can't go eight miles without a change?'

'Lord love you!' said I to Susan; 'what precious fools these landmen are! Get him the bottle of brandy, and perhaps he will understand that, although it may be French. There,' says I, as I poured out a glass, and gave Susan the bottle to clap in the locker; 'that's as good as twenty horses—swallow that, and then you will sail head to wind like a steamboat. That's well done; and the next time you come this way, we will pipe to grog again. Now then heave and a weigh, my lad! and take care how you weather the omnibuses: they are so long, that they shoot well ahead in stays; and when they make a stern board to pick up a passenger, they clap the cabin-door right athwart the road. Now mind your steerage, my fine fellow! and if you want a signal-man aloft, I'm the man, for I'm used to the masthead.'

Well, away we drove; and as I was rather afraid of this galloping affair, I kept a good look-out from the cabin windows. 'Starboard a little,' said I, as we ran by the Elephant and Castle, 'or you'll be aboard of some of this convoy;—port with all, my lad, or you'll be athwart hawse of the turnpike gate.—There, steady now—that's your sort; steer right over the bridge, and take care you don't yaw us over the breastwork.'

'A sailor adrift!' said one fellow. 'You be d—d!' said I; upon which a whole batch of boys followed the carriage, hallooing and shouting like mad ones. The horses, being all fire and tow, set to work to run a race with them; and as we huffed short round the corner to get into Parliament-street, we were nearly on our beam-ends. 'Shorten sail, you precious cuc'oon!' said I; 'why, I'm blessed if the ship is not running away with us! Bring her to the wind gently, and heave-to for a moment, if you can't reef topsails going before it.'

Well, I must say this for the man at the wheel, that he steered beautifully: it was touch and go a dozen times, but that's a sign of a good pilot. He knew all the reaches fore and aft the great town; and after getting us first on one tack, then on the other, until I began to think he was beating Tom Cox's travels.

'Well, Mr. Marshall, what do you propose?'

'Why, my lord, I have given this case, knowing your lordship's anxiety about it, a most patient consideration. I have procured copies of the will, and I have on my own responsibility taken counsel's opinion upon the case, as far as I could state it—not having seen the paper in Mr. Brace's possession, and which he seems determined not to show.'

'Ner ever will,' says I, 'but to the judge upon the bench: no, not even to his lordship. If I go to my grave knowing that no mortal man has ever held that paper in his hands but myself, then I know that Tackle's last wishes have been complied with and I shall close my eyes without a groan.'

'You see, my lord, that I was obliged to propose the questions to counsel, founded on the supposition that the seal was removed partially; and, for all we know, the letter may at this moment be closed sufficiently to establish our case. The answers to the queries I have brought with me, and here they are:—"I am of opinion, that if the seal is totally removed, a successful defence of the point would be impossible, the words of the will being so very explicit: on the contrary, although the seal may be damaged, and even broken, yet if it can be shown that the letter is in that state so as to render its having been opened impossible, or most highly improbable, I am of opinion that the action may be safely maintained." Here is the paper, my lord, with the extracts of the will; and now you are as much in possession of the case as I am.'

'I'm bless'd,' said I, as I gave the table a crack with my hand, which set bottles and glasses, plates and dishes, a-dancing, 'if I don't think that the paper is all fast in a piece of the inside lining! but I won't touch it again to look—not for the universal world.'

'What reason have you for thinking so, old boy?' said his lordship.

'Why, your honour, because when I saw what I had done, I gave the outside part a bit of a hit with a light hand, and it did not come open.'

'Then, Mr. Brace,' said Mr. Marshall, 'will you send me the paper enclosed and send it any way you like?—only take care not to put the seal again over the enclosed one, in order that I may have it ready to produce in court.'

'I could have saved your honour,' said I, 'half the question, by saying that I will produce it myself, and no man breathing but the judge shall handle it.'

'I have some kind of feeling, Mr. Marshall,' said his lordship, 'that all this will come right after all: it is but a slender hope that Brace has given us, yet to that hope I

will cling. You will, therefore, take it for granted that I intend to combat this business, and I wish to know how you propose to proceed. I see well enough that we must work in the dark, for old Ben is determined not to let us go on to a certainty. Now, Ben, couldn't you bring the letter here and let me see it? we will just look and try if we can proceed with hope or not.'

'No, my lord,' said I, standing up: 'I never told but one lie to a living man, and I'll keep my word with the dead.'

'Freshen hawse, Ben,' said his lordship, as he shook my hand: 'I honour your feeling, and I shall not again ask you to alter your determination. You must proceed, Mr. Marshall, according to the regular plan.'

'Then, my lord, I shall give notice to the trustees to pay the interest to Mr. Brace tomorrow, for it became due yesterday. They will refuse unless the document is produced, and we will then bring an action against them in the Common Pleas, in order to enforce the payment; we can avoid the Chancery Court altogether by getting an order to have the case tried in the Pleas; and they will be glad enough to meet our wishes, as they think they are sure of their cause, and therefore will willingly avoid delays and expenses.'

'So let it be then. And now, Brace, a bumper to the success of your law-suit; and I have this consolation for you to take to bed with you—that the more desperate your case is, the more likely you are to succeed: we'll fight them openly and honourably like seamen; and if you are beaten, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done your duty by your wife and her daughter, and that you will never be worse off than you are at present; but, on the contrary, that your wife and daughter shall be under my protection. If you require any more shot in your lockers, old Ben, you will apply to Mr. Marshall, and he will keep the racks full.—And now, having settled our plans of operation, let's keep our spirits up a little, and hope for the best. How do you like the wine, old boy?' said his lordship, as he caught me by the hand; 'and just tell us a little what you do with yourself at Greenwich from daylight to dark.'

'That's easily answered, my lord,' said I, 'for I do nothing, and the rest help me. We sometimes spin out yarns; but I believe I have run all mine off the reel; so, like a midshipman in war time, I turn my clothes bag end for end, and begin again. We have most of us got short memories for the present time; although we remember years and years ago, with the dates of the actions and the names of the officers, as well as ever.'

any alteration on our part. Believe me, Ben, you had better remain where you are; and after the coachman has taken his ale, then you can give him some liquor.'

'Why, Susan,' said I, 'you are afraid of a capsize! These gentlemen are not like waisters in a large ship, always dirty and always near the grog-tub; it's only now and then that they bouse their jibs up; and surely, if the gentleman drives us in a lord's carriage, we ought to give him something to keep the cold out of his stomach.'

'Nonsense, my dear!' said Susan: 'at any rate, I don't think Lord Hennington would like his carriage to be stopping for half-an-hour at a gin-palace.'

At this moment the door was opened, and I walked out. 'I shall stand the shot, my hearty,' said I; and I own I felt more at home when I got to the tap than I did at St. James's Square. To be sure, I thought afterwards that his lordship's black strap might have been a little too heavy for me: for when I had turned down a couple of glasses and got on the box of the coach in the air, I every now and then thought I saw two coaches instead of one. The coachman was only a sheet or two in the wind, neither drunk nor sober, but cherry merry; and much it pleased Susan to find herself safe and sound, and with her old boy safe also, notwithstanding we had steered rather wild on the wav.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

'My timbers! what lingo he'd coil and belay! Why, 'twas just all as one as his Dutch.'

Sea Song.

'SPUCE the main brace, my hearty,' said I, 'before you take a fresh departure: it's rather dark, and you had better steer small when you get near the bridge. There, give us your flipper! I suppose you know the course and distance to be run before you heave to?'

'Why,—y—y—yes, admiral,' said the coachman, who was now unfit to muster at quarters, and was getting every moment worse; 'of course I know the distance. So good night, old woman!' and he slewed the carriage end for end, and started off at a furious pace.

'I would rather lose the law-suit than any accident should happen to that carriage,' said Susan: 'but we are safe, thank God! and if he runs against anything, we are not there to share in the blame.'

'Nonsense, ma'am!' said I. 'Now tell me, Susan, how would you like to be a fine

lady like Jane—to have carriage, and horses —all the servants—that house—in short, to be the wife of a lord?'

'As true, Ben, as I live, I would rather be your wife. There—you need not smother me with kisses! The great and the fine have thousands of ailments to which we are strangers. It's true, they blaze for a short time, and then they die: we have great hardships to encounter, and die also; but it is labour and employment which weary us into sleep, and we sleep soundly—we have few cares even for the morrow, and we are happier in our state than they are in theirs.'

'There's something in that, Susan; for many a time, after a hard day's work, I have been to my hammock and slept like a top, whilst Nelson, who had all the charge, was restless and unquiet: he knew the danger, I did not. I slept because I was tired; he was tired more in mind than I was in body, and yet he never closed his eyes the whole blessed night during the heavy gale in the Gulf of Lions. So I suppose you are right: if we are contented here, we need envy no one.'

'No, Ben, but we may feel grateful for a kindness.'

'A kindness!' said I; 'there is not in this world a kinder-hearted girl than Jane! How many thousands are there, who would have been ashamed to know even an honest old seaman—to have owned a pensioner in Greenwich for a relation; and who, if they had given charity to one of their own kin, would have treated them like beggars—have chucked the money over the lee quarter, and left the half-sinking craft to have borne up and picked it up the best way she could, and then have made sail, showing the colours when far enough off, to make them sensible to whom they owed the obligation, whilst they dreaded being near enough to be thanked even for their charity, if charity it can be called which is ashamed of its own act! When a woman is grateful, Susan, she does not do her work by halves; she is heart and soul in the cause, and it is not a trifle which will turn her from her course.'

'Ah,' continued I, 'Lord love you all! dear you are to men in health—kind to men in sickness—always ready to serve the sorrowful and support the afflicted. I tell you, dame, if the law had allowed it, I, being so fond of you all, would have married every blessed one of you: I'd rather see the flutter of a petticoat in a breeze than all the Flushing jackets in Europe. Good night, Susan; I must be off! and when I lie down to-night, I shall almost bless Tackle for having left such a creature as Jane behind him.'

The next morning, Tom's gravestone was all cut and dried, and painted, and stuck up, when I took an overhaul at the anchorage. When I afterwards walked away to Susan's

their names as often as play-actors), to take a passage from London to Cawsand on board the *Nancy*, a vessel, from her peculiar build and description, admirably adapted for the business: she was a schooner——'

'A sloop, your honour,' said I.

'Thank you, sir,' he continued; 'a sloop then, of so careless a rig, that no one would suspect her of being employed in a contraband trade, but of a build which enabled her to sail so fast that few could have caught her. When this Tackle, who commanded her, had got through the Downs on his passage to the Eddystone Lighthouse, off which he was to fall in with a vessel from Guernsey, having smuggled articles on board, and which cargo Tackle was to run, he made attempts to lure the plaintiff into the same course of life which he himself pursued, and he used all those arguments best calculated to ensure his success: for at that time, gentlemen, the plaintiff was young in years, of a robust health, active, intelligent, and, from the various actions in which he had fought, every way calculated to face any danger, or to forward any desperate enterprise. With the true spirit of a British seaman, however, he refused so base, so unworthy an employment. Tackle, still thinking he might succeed in entrapping him, did not put into execution the design he harboured; but when he fell in with his coadjutor, one Jacob, it was resolved to keep Fearnay a prisoner, for fear of his betraying the secret now in his power, and thus leading to the detection and apprehension of Tackle.

'During the time the crews of the smugglers were employed running the cargo, the plaintiff slipped overboard and effected his escape, and hastened to the abode of his parents, at the windows of which he saw Tackle listening and looking. I must here, gentlemen, put you in possession of another fact; which is, that during Fearnay's trip in the *Nancy*, her captain, when in a state of intoxication, had recounted the seduction of Fearnay's sister, and it was evident, from the situation in which he was found, that he had intentions of continuing, not only his illicit trade, but his illicit connection. A scuffle ensued between the parties: the sister, hearing the noise, and recognising the voices, that of her brother, and that of the man she most loved, rushed out of the house; and Tackle, in order to effect his escape, pointed a pistol at the plaintiff: his sister rushed forward to seize the weapon, and received its contents and died.

'It is requisite, gentlemen of the jury, for me to dwell upon this subject a little; for although apparently of no connection with the cause, you will find it to prove the strong integrity of the plaintiff. Gentlemen, I blush to say, an attorney was concerned

with the smugglers; and he was the first husband of the plaintiff's wife. That man was named Tapes; and he had a brother of the same name, and, I fear, of the same calling, inasmuch as Tackle had been employed by both of them; the latter residing at Exeter, and carrying on the trade of a wine and spirit merchant in that city. There cannot be a shadow of a doubt but that Tapes of Cawsand assisted at the smuggling of these goods, and passed them on to his brother. Gentlemen, Tapes of Cawsand was convicted before a jury of smuggling; indeed, the goods were found in an old bakehouse, the property of his wife before his marriage, and then and at that time actually in possession of Tapes. Tackle effected his escape, but Tapes was sentenced to serve on board a man-of-war for ten years: he was taken ill on board of the hulks, and died there, leaving a wife and four children. At this moment, when starvation stared the hopeless family in the face—ay, gentlemen, when hope had withdrawn its last rays—and you know, gentlemen, how long hope will last, even in the most desperate of cases; for we have known the felon, even with the rope about his neck and the cap drawn over his face, still cling to hope, and express his belief that he's to be pardoned even when the bolt is half drawn—at that moment, gentlemen, this gullant straightforward English sailor—I can give him no higher character than that he was the follower of the immortal Nelson—stepped forward: he offered all he possessed to the widow of that man through whose evil ways he had lost his only sister; he not only gave with seamanlike liberality his last farthing, but he married her, and restored her to an honourable life. Gentlemen, by his exertions he supported his wife and Tapes's children. Death made fearful havoc in the family; for I find in my brief, that, after the battle of Trafalgar, three of the four had died, leaving only one, a daughter, and who is mainly interested in this cause.

'Gentlemen, I now come to the most important part of this case, and to which I must beg your undivided attention. In 1801, you will remember that Lord Nelson made an attack on the flotilla off Boulogne:—'

'I beg your pardon, your honour,' said I, 'but Nelson did not go himself.' I got as far as this, when his lordship hailed me down—for I jumped up when I began to speak.

'No matter, my gallant fellow,' continued the lawyer, whose lungs must have been made of air-pumps, for he never took breath. 'Gentlemen, you doubtless are well informed of the circumstances to which I allude. It was during the attack made upon that flotilla by the boats of the English squadron, that an Englishman was

eye of curiosity to pry into the secrets of the dead. Nay, with such scrupulous faith has he acted, that not even his legal adviser has been permitted to see the paper; and I, his counsel, to this moment am as ignorant as the child unborn whether the paper be opened or not. All I am informed of is this: that when he received this document, on which now rests his claim to that money which would support his wife in affluence, or beggar her to poverty, he carefully enveloped it in another cover; that on his way to Mr. Hawk, whither he went with all the unsuspecting frankness of a sailor, to cope with one cunning in the law, subtle in evasions, and whose greatest disgrace is his having so sought to arrive at his end, he removed the envelope: he had, unguardedly, placed his seal over that of the deed; and in removing one, he tore away the other. I see my learned adversary smile; but he must be aware that, although the seal is removed, the letter may be unopened: and this will shortly be decided by his lordship.

'It remains for me, gentlemen of the jury, having made you thus familiar with the case, only to call upon you to exercise your best judgment in this affair. It is a case where a counsel can be of little use, as the justice of the claim is founded upon a deed which will be opened in your presence. But surely, surely it would be hard to deprive this gallant veteran of his due, if through such a circumstance as the one I have mentioned he should have forfeited his claim. But I do not envy that man's conscience, who, seeing the short space of life in all probability allotted to that gallant man, could wrest from him that which it was clearly the intention of the testator should be a reward for his good faith, and enable him to pass his few days to come in comfort and in affluence.'

After this long winded yarn, I jumped up and took the good man by the hand, and said, 'Thank you, sir, for your good opinion of me; though, as I have mentioned one or two things I have rather new, had I been said; and could not say if I can make out how you have got it all down. What you ever in the future will do, I cannot say.'

'Never mind now, and go on, my friend,' said the lawyer; 'keep yourself quiet.'

'My lord,' he continued, addressing the judge, 'I propose in the first place to identify the claim.'

'And will save my learned brother the trouble,' said little Snub-nose; 'we are satisfied he is the man, but I presume it is your intention to produce the confession?'

'Certainly,' said his lordship, 'my learned brother' (addressing me) 'wishes to prove that the plaintiff is the claimant of the estate, or at least falls to be so, and—'

'Very well, my lord,' I said, 'and you, my friend, with your learned counsel, will say I

will first put in the will; and as my learned brother has a copy, of course he will save us the trouble also of producing any witnesses as to that document.'

'In regard to the will, certainly. Perhaps, my lord, the clerk of the court had better read it to the gentlemen of the jury?'

'If you please, my learned brother.'

A paper was then handed to a young man who sat before the judge, right under his feet; and as he read, little Snub-nose kept looking towards the jury, and moving his finger about as if to draw their attention to the stronger points against me; and when this passage was read, 'But if it appears that the seal has been removed, so as to allow the possibility of the document having been read by Benjamin Brace or others, then, and in that case, the entire sum aforesaid, that is to say, &c. And so it went on repeating and repeating, but twisted off at last to the old yarn, that the money and I were to part company. Well, as I was saying, when this was read, especially the word '*possibility*,' Snub-nose pointed so well to the men in the box, that I could understand his dumb-show as well as if he had talked it all with his fingers; he twisted about like a cockchafer on a pin, and made more faces, and full as ugly as a clown at a play.

When the little clerk had done reading, my man said, 'Now, Mr. Brace, produce the document;' and as I unbuttoned my coat to get at it, every blessed man and woman in the court leaned over to see it, and at that moment you might have heard a pin fall. Well, I took it out, and I unloosed the parcel of my pocket-hank relief; upon which little Snub-nose said, 'Let me see it, sir, if you please; allow me to look at it.' So I turns round, and says I, 'If I do, I'll be a d—d, old boy!'

'You had better hand it to his lordship,' said my man.

'That's just the tack I'm going to sail upon.' But, said I to his lordship, 'my lord, as God is above, I have never read it: I pretend Tackle no man should read it, and I put your lordship with neither read it myself, nor satify the curiosity of that fellow in the wig, who has got ready to believe any I might have said to taste a new Yankee rime.'

Well, at this there was a great laugh; and then, as I sat in the court, a fellow cried out, and began them a lot of rights. The clerk who read the will put out his paw for the paper; but says I, 'Avast! leaving there, separate! every man to his station, and the clock to the fore-shaft. No man touches this but his lordship, and he won't read it either.' 'There, my lord,' said I, as I gave it to him, 'you are the first man who has ever touched the original of this paper; and if it was not for my wife and

'and, gentlemen of the jury, you will be pleased to observe that the "SEAL is broken." I mention this as the will has reference to it. And now, gentlemen of the jury—'

'We are quite satisfied, my lord,' said the ringleader of that round robin.

'No doubt, gentlemen,' said his lordship; 'but this must be beyond a doubt.' So saying, he opened the paper, and out fell an enclosure. His lordship took it up and proceeded: 'Gentlemen, on this paper—the paper which had the seal—there is not a word written;' and he handed it to my opponent; 'and here, on this enclosure, are two seals:—one, the pelican with the snake, the same as that we have already referred to; and the other, a helmet, with the initials R. C.'

'It's the chaplain's,' said I, 'my lord; it's Mr. Carter's; for when the master-at-arms came to tell Tackle that his hour was come and the yard-rope manned, he sealed that paper, and borrowed the seal from the chaplain.'

'Poh, poh! my good fellow,' said little snub-nose; 'it's very strange you never thought of that before.'

'My lord,' said my man, 'that is my case.'

The letter was handed round to the jury, and to my and the opposite lawyer. The seal was examined—nay, tried by Tapes's seal; and Hawk and the little lawyer chattered away like young rooks; whilst Mr. Kite, making a bow to me and shaking me by the hand, walked out of the court.

'May it please your lordship—gentlemen of the jury,' began the little fat lawyer, 'well might my learned opponent begin his opening speech by saying, that "in all his professional practice a harder task had never devolved upon him than the cause in which he is now engaged;" and very certain am I, that, had he said "a more hopeless case," you, gentlemen of the jury, would have given him the credit due to his sincerity. There are cases so easily disposed of, and so certain in their results, that nothing has surprised me more than that the plaintiff should have had the audacity to bring the action at all, knowing that he must be defeated: but drowning men catch at straws, and I dare say, to use a phrase familiar to the plaintiff, he was told "that a chance shot might kill the devil." Those shots may succeed in a naval action; but in an action in the Common Pleas, where we are defended by the bulwark of honesty, those shots only hit which are directed by the coolness and clear-sightedness of truth.'

'Gentlemen of the jury, my learned brother was pleased to enact the biographer in regard to his client; and you may now judge how true is the saying of Coleridge, that "literary executors make sad havoc

of the testator's brains." You would suppose, from the statement made by my learned brother, that the plaintiff, although bold and resolute before the enemies of his country, was shy, stupid, wanting in common observance—a very infant in regard to transactions on shore—and that he, poor, dear, little, tender-minded fellow! went to Mr. Hawk's house like a sheep to the slaughter, unconscious that his destruction was at hand. Gentlemen, at that interview, which my learned brother has designated as the greatest disgrace to my client, there were three gentlemen present besides the defendant, all men of high reputation and character; and one, the partner of my client, when he heard the plaintiff say that the seal was removed, actually advised him not to show the letter, but to furnish himself with a legal adviser. Does this look like inveigling the ignorant seaman to a house in order to plunder him, when one of the parties points out the danger of the navigation, and recommends the unskilful mariner to take a pilot? So far from this being the fact, the old weather-beaten seaman was received like a friend, counselled as a friend, dismissed as a friend. The only object the defendant had was, to avoid litigation, at once to relinquish the money had the seal been entire; and no man, I am sure, would more generously have made a sacrifice of that which is clearly his own, than my honest, upright, and generous client. What follows? The attorney for the plaintiff makes a *claim*. Gentlemen of the jury, remark that—a *claim* upon the dividends, without once acting up to the terms of the will! And when, forsooth, he is refused this very unreasonable demand, he brings this action, in order to frighten those into subjection whom he could not openly conquer. But we are not so easily conquered. It was nothing more than a straw thrown up to show the direction of the wind, and I am very much mistaken if the plaintiff does not find himself taken aback.'

'Well, then,' said I, 'old boy, I shall brace about, or pay round off on my heel.'

'No doubt,' he continued; 'and I fancy that is his object; or, in other words, to tip his attorney leg-bail, and show him his heels as quickly as possible, paying him off by running off. Of course, gentlemen of the jury, the plaintiff's character is the most material point on which my opponent rests his claim. As for the seals, they are of little importance—bread seals may be made so as to defy detection; and, for all we know, this precious document is nothing more than a blank sheet of paper on which the plaintiff has affixed two seals, whilst the original document, after having been read, may have been destroyed. But it is our intention to have that opened; for it so

sign of a weakness of heart ; and that to do good to your neighbour and act honestly to all men, gives more real contentment and happiness than all the riches of the world, or all the flattery of mankind. Take my blessing, Kite ! make her a good husband, and she'll make you a happy man. Don't go beating about the bush as Hawk did, giving old Jacobs money to rob the honest and damn himself ; but stretch out your hand like a seaman to save a poor honest fellow from distress. The day will come when honesty will be rewarded, and when the launch of life will have no stoppings on the ways, but go clean off, as smoothly and as silently as a snow-fall on the sea.

' My blessings on you, Susan ! God bless you ! who have stood by me in fair and in foul weather—who have never let the misery of the moment give rise to the anger of words. Here am I, Ben Brace, nearly seventy-eight years of age. I hope I have done my duty like a seaman and a man in this world, and I thank God that I am able to declare, when I overhaul my log of life, that I can't find out I ever dealt dishonestly with my friend or cruelly by my enemy. And now I can say, what Benbow said before me, and what every honest man would wish to say after me : "What little I have got, I have got *honestly* : it never cost a seaman a tear, or my country a farthing."

THE END.

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